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IN THE

**Supreme Court of the United States**

October Term, 1975

**No. 75-9721**

Herbert Mildner, *Appellant,*  
*vs.*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice,  
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Department, *et al.*,  
*Appellees.*

**On Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Eastern District of New York**

**JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT**

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January 7, 1976

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HERBERT MILDNER,

Appellant,

vs.

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, et al.,

Appellees.

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On Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York

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JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

Introduction

This jurisdictional statement

is submitted on behalf of appellant, Herbert Mildner, an attorney-at-law who by this proceeding has challenged, on constitutional grounds, the procedure in New York State for disciplining attorneys. The appeal is from an order of a three judge United States District Court, sitting in the Eastern District of New York, convened pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §2281. By that order, a divided court refused to grant appellant's request for a preliminary and permanent injunction against the use of the New York State disciplinary procedure and his request for a declaration that such procedure was constitutionally infirm. Said order dismissed appellant's complaint.

This jurisdictional statement is

submitted pursuant to Rule 15 of the Rules of this Court. There is also submitted herewith, under separate cover, an appendix containing the opinions and order below and other opinions and documents relevant to this jurisdictional statement.

There is no doubt that the questions presented in this case are serious. Thus, Judge Moore, the Chief Judge in the Court below, specifically stated that the constitutional question posed was "of sufficient importance to be resolved by our highest court." Judge Neaher, although finding the constitutional claims to be without merit, and desiring to abstain from interfering with New York State's attorney disciplinary proceedings, still joined in the order which

stayed the suspension of appellant pending disposition of the appeal from the three judge Courts' order because he felt that "serious procedural and substantive issues are presented,...." In addition, Judge Weinstein considered the appellant's claim so serious that he agreed with the claim that the New York State attorney disciplinary procedure was unconstitutional, in that it deprived appellant of both due process and equal protection of the law.

Appellant's claim arises on account of his suspension from the practice of law by the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, which suspension resulted despite a Referee's findings that the charges against Appellant had

not been sustained.

The basis of appellant's claim challenging the constitutionality of New York State's statutory procedure for disciplining attorneys is first that attorneys, unlike all other New York professionals, have no appeal as of right from an original determination that they should be disciplined. All other professionals licensed to practice in the State of New York do have an appeal from any order of discipline, said appeal being as of right. In addition, all litigants within the State, other than disciplined attorneys, have at least one appeal as of right from any adverse determination. However, because of the



unique structure of New York State's procedure for disciplining attorneys, attorneys have only a limited right of appeal from any original determination disciplining them. Section 90 of the New York State Judiciary Law (Appendix D, 124a)\* is the critical provision. The second ground raised by Appellant is the fact that the Referee who was appointed by the Appellate Division to hear the witness and arguments of counsel found that the charges against him were not sustained, and the Appellate Division summarily reversed the findings of that Referee, without giving any reasons there-

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\*Unless indicated otherwise, all numbers contained in parenthesis relate to the separately bound Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement.

for, and without benefit of any hearing or presentation of oral argument, denying him both due process and equal protection of the laws.

Judge Weinstein agreed with these contentions in the following language:

"The trier, Appellate Division, decides the facts without hearing the witnesses and without the opportunity to determine credibility by observing them testify; it denies counsel the opportunity to orally argue the merits of the case; and it fails to give reasons for its decision, even when it rejects the report of the Referees who have heard the witnesses." (Appendix A, 80a.)

Judge Weinstein further stated  
that:

"The law also is unconstitutional in denying attorneys the equal protection of an appeal permitted all other professionals."  
(Appendix A, 99a.)

The issues presented to the Court below, and sought to be presented to this Court, involve, as all three judges below agreed, substantial questions. They go to the very right of an attorney-at-law to practice his profession free from arbitrary, unreasonable and unconstitutional procedures for his discipline, including his potential suspension and disbarment. In this regard, it was not disputed that appellant is an attorney-at-law duly admitted to practice within the State of

New York whose sole income is from the practice of law and whose entire source of income would be terminated if his suspension by the Appellate Division be permitted to stand.

The three judge Court below was convened pursuant to an order of Judge Weinstein, dated October 23, 1974 (Appendix B, 107a). Subsequently, this case was consolidated with cases raising similar claims pursuant to an order dated March 12, 1975 (Appendix C, 121a).

As indicated infra, the three judges each rendered a separate opinion in the consolidated cases. Judge Neaher's opinion dismissed the complaint, holding both that the procedure challenged did not violate appellant's

constitutional rights and that the Federal Courts should not intervene in State disciplinary proceedings. Judge Moore held only that the challenged procedure was constitutional. Judge Weinstein, in a dissenting opinion, found that the challenged procedure was unconstitutional and that the Federal Courts should not abstain from so holding.

As indicated above, all three judges joined in the order to the extent that they unanimously agreed that the stay, which had been entered by Judge Weinstein, of the disciplining of each attorney, would be continued pending disposition of any appeals.

The cases consolidated with this case were Milton Levin v. Frank A. Gulotta,

(U.S.D.C., E.D. #74-C-1668) and Julius Gerzof a/k/a Julius M. Gerzof v. Frank A. Gulotta, (U.S.D.C., E.D. #74-C-1684).

Each of the three plaintiffs have filed Notices of Appeal to this Court and appellant Milton Levin has heretofor filed a jurisdictional statement with this Court. To the extent permitted by the rules of this Court (see, e.g., Rule 15, subdivision 3), it is respectfully requested that said jurisdictional statement of appellant Levin be considered as "covering" this case as well.

Reports of Opinions of the Court Below

The opinions of the Court below have not yet been reported. A copy of the Opinion and Order of the three-judge court, as well as a copy of the Opinion and Order of the Hon. Jack B. Weinstein convening the three-judge court, appear as Appendix A(1a) and Appendix B (107a) respectively, of the separate Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement.



The Nature Of the Proceeding And Statute  
Pursuant To Which It Is Brought:

This is a civil rights action brought by an attorney who had been practicing law for more than 15 years in which he seeks to permanently enjoin the respondents (certain officials of the State of New York) from suspending him from the practice of law and for a declaration that the procedure for disciplining attorneys in the State of New York are constitutionally invalid. This action, brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 and 28 U.S.C. §§1343 and 2201, is based on the appellant's claim that the disciplinary procedures adopted by New York State deny appellant his constitutional rights to due process and equal protection.

The Date Of The Order And Judgment  
Sought To Be Reviewed, The Date Notice  
Of Appeal Was Filed, And The Court In  
Which It Was Filed:

The Order sought to be reviewed was dated and entered on the 9th day of October, 1975. The judgment was entered on the 16th day of October, 1975. The Notice of Appeal was filed on the 7th day of November in the office of the Clerk of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The Statutory Provision Conferring On  
The Court Jurisdiction Of The Appeal.

The statutory provision conferring jurisdiction on this Court is  
28 U.S.C. §1253.

JURISDICTION OF THE COURT

As previously indicated, this is an appeal from an order of a three-judge district court dismissing the appellant's complaint on the merits. The complaint sought permanent injunctive and declaratory relief on the ground that the disciplinary procedures of the State of New York deny attorneys due process and equal protection of law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution (149a). Thus, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. §1253, this is a direct appeal from

"...an order granting or denying, after notice and hearing, an interlocutory or permanent injunction in any civil action, suit or proceeding required by any

Act of Congress to be heard and determined by a district court of three judges."

This appeal falls squarely within the rule recently enunciated by this Court in MTM, Inc. v. Basley, 420 U.S. 779 (1975). Thus, in MTM, this Court held that such appeals will lie, jurisdictionally, where

✓ "[T]he order [of the three-judge court] rests upon resolution of the merits of the constitutional claim presented below." 420 U.S. at 804.

Analysis of the determination below reveals not only that all three judges considered the merits but that the merits formed the very basis of the dismissal.

A substantial portion of Judge Neaher's opinion dealt with and sought to

resolve the merits of plaintiff's constitutional claim (17a-27a). In his concurring opinion, Judge Moore specifically stated

"...I would dismiss on the merits...for the reasons stated in Judge Neaheer's opinion." (34a).

Judge Weinstein, in dissent, would have granted appellant the relief sought on constitutional grounds. In granting a stay of the State suspension order pending appeals, all three judges acknowledged that "serious...substantive issues are presented." (33a).

To the extent, if any, that Judge Neaheer would have based dismissal on the abstention doctrine (27a-32a), there is no bar to the exercise of jurisdiction

by this court. In the first instance, Judge Neaher was alone in his statement that the federal courts should not intervene. In the second instance, as both Judges Neaher and Moore recognized, the interests of judicial economy would best be served by a final determination from this Court (32a, 37a). Thus, to require appellant to first present these issues to the United States Court of Appeals, which might well reject the one basis upon which it can hear the appeal - abstention - would be unduly burdensome. Finally, Judge Neaher's concurrence in the granting of a stay pending appeal would be totally inconsistent with a view that abstention is proper since the stay itself represents an interference

with the State's judicial mechanism. Judge Neaher's participation in the stay pending appeals is a recognition of his desire to have this Court review this matter. Otherwise he could have stayed the punishment of Appellant pending appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals only. His choice not to do so, and his full consideration of the merits, shows that he decided this case on the merits and wanted this Court to do so. Thus, it is clear that the determination of the three-judge court was on the merits.

In view of the foregoing, it is clear that the instant appeal is squarely within this Court's narrow construction of 28 U.S.C. §1253 and this court should,



as Judge Moore suggested, decide the "real issue" (36a) - appellant's constitutional claims.

In this connection, this court recently affirmed, summarily, a three judge court injunction of a state statute which three dissenting justices believed to be moot since the statute no longer existed when the determination was made.

Buchannan v. Evans, U.S. ,  
44 L.W. 3299 (1975). Since the matter involved a school redistricting, the constitutional issues were significant. By its affirmance, this court recognized that the true test is what the District Court does and not what it should have done. Since the three-judge court in Buchannan reached the merits, this court

had proper jurisdiction to summarily affirm. Similarly, in this case, since the three-judge court did reach the merits, which they all acknowledged to be significant, jurisdiction can and should be exercised.

The State Statute Challenged:

The State Statute challenged in this action is Section 90 of the Judiciary Law of the State of New York (Appendix D, 124a). As indicated in the dissenting opinion of Judge Weinstein (U.S.D.C.), Article 6, Section 3(a) of the New York State Constitution [McKinney's N.Y. Const. Art.VI, §3(a) (1962)]; and Sections 5501(b) and 5601 of the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules [McKinney's New York Civil Practice Law and Rules §§5501(b) and 5601] are also involved (Appendix E, 130a).

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

In this case, an attorney has been suspended from the practice of law by the State's intermediate Appellate Court, sitting as a tribunal of original jurisdiction, which did not hear testimony of a single witness, did not permit oral argument to be addressed to it, and gave no explanation for its decision. In doing so, it made a per curiam reversal of a decision contained in the 18 page opinion of a lower court judge sitting as a Referee to hear and report, who evaluated the credibility of the witnesses after conducting seven hearings which produced more than 850 pages of testimony. The attorney has been denied

any state appeal from his suspension, unlike any other professional in the state whose suspension could stand only after a finding on appeal that the suspension was supported by "substantial evidence", and unlike any other litigant who has one appeal as of right from any adverse determination.

The basic question presented to this court is whether the State's constitutional and statutory attorney disciplinary structure which establishes these procedures violates the Fourteenth Amendment rights of attorneys as secured by the United States Constitution.

The specific questions raised by the State's constitutional and statutory attorney disciplinary structure are as

follows:

1. Whether it is a violation of Equal Protection for the state to afford all professionals other than attorneys a full adversarial trial before a tribunal of original jurisdiction while permitting attorneys to be disciplined by a tribunal of original jurisdiction which does not hear the testimony of any witnesses, does not permit oral argument to be addressed to it, and which need not provide any factual findings or explanation for its decision.

2. Whether it is a violation of Equal Protection for a state to afford all professionals other than attorneys the right to have disciplinary action taken by a tribunal of original jurisdic-

tion after a full adversarial hearing, which may be challenged on appeal and upheld only if supported by substantial evidence, while affording attorneys no appellate review of a disciplinary decision taken by a tribunal of original jurisdiction which has not afforded the attorney a full adversarial hearing.

3. Whether it is a violation of Equal Protection for a state to afford one appeal as of right to all litigants other than attorneys.

4. Whether the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires that attorneys be afforded a full adversarial trial by the tribunal of original jurisdiction.

5. Whether the Due Process



Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires that attorneys be given one appeal as of right from adverse disciplinary action when they have not been afforded a full adversarial hearing by the tribunal of original jurisdiction.

FACTS

Appellant has been continually engaged in the practice of law in New York State since June 11, 1959. During that time, he has had an unblemished record with the exception of the disciplinary proceeding which is the subject of this action.

This disciplinary proceeding was commenced on October 4, 1972, by the New York State's Supreme Court, Appellate Division, which appointed the Hon. Albert McGrover, a Justice of the Supreme Court, Kings County, as a Referee to hear and report to it in connection with certain charges. The charges had initially been investigated by the Judicial Inquiry of the Kings County Bar Association and were

the result of an original complaint filed by Roberta Evans, who had been the appellant's intimate acquaintance for many years.

At the initial hearings conducted by the Judicial Inquiry, Mrs. Evans stated that the appellant had converted more than Seventeen Thousand (\$17,000.00) Dollars that she had entrusted to him to protect from any claim by her husband with whom a divorce action was pending. However, at the subsequent hearings before Mr. Justice McGrover, Mrs. Evans recanted her prior testimony and admitted that she had lied on numerous occasions before the Judicial Inquiry because she wanted to get back her money and because she almost had a nervous

breakdown because she didn't get her money back when she was supposed to. In this connection, she testified in detail that she had authorized the appellant to use the money both to invest for her and to pay his own debts. She also testified before Justice McGrover that during this period of time she and the appellant were discussing the possibility of marriage.

On the basis of Mrs. Evans' recantations, and on the basis of seven (7) days of hearings which produced an extensive record, consisting of more than 850 pages, Mr. Justice McGrover prepared a detailed 18 page report dated June 12, 1973 (Appendix H, 151a), in which he concluded that none of the charges

against the appellant had been sustained. On January 28, 1974, the Appellate Division, on the basis of the record alone, in a per curiam opinion, rejected the Referee's report, without stating any reasons for its rejection, and suspended appellant from the practice of law for a three (3) year period commencing March 1, 1974. The Court's opinion made no detailed factual findings but rather, in conclusory fashion, stated: "In our opinion, contrary to the report, all three charges are fully sustained by the proof." Appellant was not afforded an opportunity to present oral argument or evidence in the Appellate Division; that court acted merely on the papers submitted.

Having obtained a stay of the order of suspension, appellant made an application to the Appellate Division for reargument or for permission to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals. That motion was denied on March 21, 1974.

Thereafter, on March 27, 1974, the appellant filed a Notice of Motion in the New York Court of Appeals seeking leave to appeal to that court from the Appellate Division's order of suspension. The application for leave to appeal was based upon the following grounds:

"A. Respondent-Appellant [Plaintiff] was deprived of due process of law under the Federal and State Constitutions in that the order of suspension was based upon the recanted testimony of an admitted perjured witness; and

B. The Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department, erred in reversing the findings of fact and conclusions arrived at by the Learned Justice who saw the witnesses and heard the testimony and concluded that none of the charges against [Plaintiff] had been sustained by the evidence; and

C. That as a matter of law, the charges against the Respondent-Appellant [Plaintiff] have not been established."

Appellant's motion was denied by the New York Court of Appeals on May 9, 1974.

The reason why appellant had to proceed by application for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals rather than by direct appeal as of right is because the New York State Procedure for Disciplining Attorneys does not provide an attorney aggrieved by a suspension or disbarment

order an absolute right of appeal. It is not disputed that every other litigant within the State and especially professionals who are disciplined do have at least one appeal as of right from any determination adverse to them. This appeal, granted to all others, from the tribunal of original jurisdiction, is on all questions of law and fact. The application of the New York State structure thus prevented appellant from obtaining, as of right, appellate review of the Appellate Divison's suspension order.

While the appellant may have had a right to appeal to the New York State Court of Appeals on certain constitutional issues, his appeal would have been limited, because the New York



State Constitution permits the New York State Court of Appeals to review only questions of law and not questions of fact (see, New York State Constitution, Article 6, Section 3, Subdivision a). Thus, appellant had no right of appeal on the facts and non-constitutional issues.

Thereafter, while the Appellate Division had sub judice a motion to fix the commencement date of appellant's suspension, appellant instituted this proceeding pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 to invalidate his suspension by the Appellate Division. The basis of his claim was that unlike any other litigant in the State of New York, he had no right of appeal from the original judicial deter-

mination to suspend him.

Simultaneously with the institution of this proceeding, appellant brought on a motion for a preliminary injunction by order to show cause signed by the Hon. Jack B. Weinstein on June 25, 1974. This order to show cause contained a stipulation between the parties which had the effect of staying appellant's suspension until September 11, 1974. This stipulation was extended by agreement of the parties pending the court's determination on appellant's application for the convening of a three judge court.

By order dated October 23, 1974, the Hon. Jack B. Weinstein determined that appellant's claim was to be heard and determined by a three judge court. This order also stayed appellant's suspension

until the three judge court determines the validity of appellant's claim.

At the present time, appellant's sole source of income is from the practice of law. He requires this income to support his own family as well as the family of his brother. His brother was killed in an automobile accident in September, 1973, and was survived by his wife, as well as two young children, ages 12 1/2 and 14. The appellant's economic burden is particularly acute because he has no money saved since he had to pay substantial medical bills in connection with the treatment of his mother who recently died of cancer.

To fully appreciate the factual background and the New York State Statu-

tory procedures for disciplining attorneys (as compared to other professionals and other litigants) which are being challenged in this proceeding, one need only review the language of Judge Weinstein contained in his opinion convening a three judge court below:

"Mr. Mildner argues that attorneys, unlike any other New York professionals, have no appeal as of right from an original determination disciplining them. Other professionals can appeal from an order of discipline to the Appellate Division as of right. Lawyers, since they are disciplined by the Appellate Division in the first instance, have only a limited right of appeal from that original determination. Section 90 of the New York Judiciary Law deals with appeals in such proceedings, providing in relevant part:

'8. Any petitioner or respondent in a disciplinary proceeding against an attorney or counsellor-at-law under this section, including a bar association or any other corporation or association, shall have the right to appeal to the court of appeals from a final order of any appellate division in such proceedings upon questions of law involved therein, subject to the limitations prescribed by article six, section seven, of the constitution of this state.'

Apparently, following a suspension order from the Appellate Division, which acts as a court of original jurisdiction, attorneys involved in disciplinary proceedings are afforded an appeal as of right to the New York Court of Appeals only with respect to issues which the Court of Appeals finds directly involve the construction of the state or federal constitutions. See, New York Constitution,

Article 6, §3 and CPLR 5501 et seq. and 5601 et seq. Whether the appeal is taken as of right or permission to appeal is granted by the Appellate Division or the Court of Appeals, it is alleged that only questions of law are reviewed. Id." (Appendix B, 113a-115a.)

It must be recognized that this defective procedure with regard to the right of appeal is coupled with one which permits the Appellate Division, the only court with the initial power to suspend or disbar an attorney, without oral argument or the benefit of any hearings, to summarily reverse the findings of its own Referee who heard witnesses and arguments of counsel. Since the Appellate Division is the only court with the power to discipline, such procedures constitute a denial of basic due process

and equal protection and raise, as all judges below acknowledged, serious questions going to the heart of the rights of appellant and all other New York State lawyers who practice their profession to earn their living.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS  
WHY THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED  
ARE SO SUBSTANTIAL AS TO  
REQUIRE PLENARY CONSIDERATION.

As noted by all three of the judges below, this case involves "... serious procedural and substantive issues... ." (33a.) The procedure for disciplining an attorney within the State of New York is, of itself, a significant matter. At risk is the livelihood of the individual attorney charged with impropriety. This directly affects his ability to earn a living in the field he has chosen. In this case, the Court is asked to reaffirm that the Due Process and Equal Protection guarantees in the United States Constitution apply to attorneys who are subjected to discipli-



nary proceedings to the same extent as other citizens.

The dissenting opinion of Judge Weinstein so clearly states the issues and enunciates the reasons why New York State's disciplinary proceedings are constitutionally infirm that one is tempted to simply reproduce that opinion at length herein. Judge Weinstein grasped the critical arguments presented by appellant as well as those presented by the plaintiffs in the consolidated cases.

This Court has held that an attorney is entitled to protection of his fundamental constitutional rights at all stages of a disciplinary proceeding.

Spevack v. Klein, 385 U.S. 511, 87 Sup. Ct. 625 (1968); In Re Ruffalo, 390 U.S.

544, 88 Sup. Ct. 1222 (1968). Indeed, this Court has even characterized disbarment proceedings as being "of a quasi-criminal nature." In Re Ruffalo, supra.

This case presents for review whether the New York State procedure for disciplining attorneys, which effectively emasculates the protections this court has enunciated for attorneys in disciplinary proceedings, should be allowed to stand. It is claimed that that procedure deprives appellant of both the equal protection and due process of law.

I. Equal Protection.

This Court has recently held, in invalidating a requirement that tenants

post a double indemnity bond as a condition of appellate review, that:

"When an appeal is afforded...it cannot be granted to some litigants and capriciously and arbitrarily denied to others without violating the Equal Protection Clause."

Lindsey v. Normet, 405 U.S. 56, 77, 92 Sup. Ct. 862, 876 (1972).

The Lindsey case represents an amplification of a consistent line of criminal and quasi-criminal cases in which this Court has required the state to alter their procedures so as to insure individual criminal defendants, like all other defendants, a right to appellate review of their convictions. See, e.g., Griffith v. Illinois, 351 U.S. 12, 76 Sup. Ct. 585 (1956).

As recognized by all of the members of the three-judge court, New York State treats attorneys in a manner different from all other litigants and professionals insofar as their right to appellate review of disciplinary proceedings is concerned. In fact, the Attorney General, representing the defendants in this action, does not dispute this circumstance. Thus, the question of whether this differential treatment denies Equal Protection is raised. This depends on whether there is a rational basis for distinguishing between attorneys and other litigants.

It is clear that Judges Neaher and Moore both recognized the applicability of the above general rules. In

fact, Judge Neaher specifically stated that the test to be applied in determining the Equal Protection claims was whether the distinction was based "... upon some ground of difference having a fair and substantial relation to the object of the legislation, so that all persons similarly circumstanced shall be treated alike." (22a; footnote and citation omitted.)

Given this explicit recognition by Judge Neaher, and the similar recognition by Judge Moore, of the seriousness of the constitutional claims involved, it is clear that this court should hear this case with full briefs and oral arguments. This should be done so that this court may confirm that an attorney is en-

titled, as matter of his basic constitutional guarantees, to the same kind of appellate rights as any other professional within the State of New York and as any other litigant who suffers an adverse determination. It is critical to remember that there is no dispute as to the difference in classifications in the within case. Quite simply, attorneys, unlike all other litigants who suffer an adverse determination, and unlike all other professionals who are subject to disciplinary proceedings, have no right of appeal on all questions of law and fact. One of the three judges below held that this was a denial of an attorney's guarantee of the equal protection of the law. Two of the other judges in-

licated that they felt that the questions were of a serious nature and ought to be reviewed by this Court. This, in and of itself, ought to be sufficient reason why this Court should note jurisdiction and hear for itself, on the basis of full briefs and oral arguments, the parties' positions. It is submitted that it is a rare case where the judges who have heard the case themselves recognize the seriousness of the questions and at least two of them urge an appeal to this Court.

Moreover, analysis of Judge Neaher's conclusion that the New York statutory scheme is constitutional reveals that his sole basis for this conclusion was the fact that the New York

State legislature deemed the disciplinary scheme appropriate (21a-24a). When compared with the test acknowledged by Judge Neaher, the failure to make a proper determination of the issue raised is clear. This error is significant and further warrants the exercise of jurisdiction by this Court.



## II. Due Process of Law

The second significant reason why this Court should entertain jurisdiction is that the procedure pursuant to which appellant was suspended deprived him of due process of law. Here, it should be recalled that appellant was first charged with professional improprieties by the Judicial Inquiry. Thereafter, the charges were referred by the Appellate Division to an official Referee. The Referee heard over 850 pages of testimony and rendered an 18 page report exonerating appellant of the charges. The Appellate Division, on the basis of papers alone, without the benefit of oral argument or the taking of testimony before it, refused to affirm the referee's

report, and directed the suspension of appellant for three (3) years, without giving any reasons for its determination.

Judge Weinstein stated appellant's position quite well in his dissenting opinion:

"In attorney disciplinary proceedings due process requires a hearing by and before the tribunal with the power to decide and punish. The Supreme Court has found such a hearing to be an important 'trial right' without which such fundamental due process guarantees as confrontation and a fair hearing would be devoid of substance. Barber v. Page 390 U.S. 719, 721, 88 S. Ct. 1318, 1320, 20 L. Ed. 2d 255 (1968); Berger v. California, 393 U.S. 314, 315, 89 S.Ct. 540, 541, 21 L. Ed. 2d 508 (1969); Williams v. State of Maryland, 375 F. Supp. 745, 756-757 (D. Md. 1974)." (83a.)

The majority below attempted to justify its conclusion that no full and complete

hearing, oral argument or written reasons are required by indicating that disbarment proceedings are something akin to an "inquest" (25a). In doing so, the majority rejected (17a) this Court's finding that disciplinary proceedings are of a quasi-criminal nature and, in effect, ignored this Court's determination in In Re Ruffalo, 390 U.S. 544 (1968).

Judge Neaher's opinion did not contain any explanation of his determination to ignore this Court's pronouncements in In Re Ruffalo, supra. If this Court does not note jurisdiction in this case and hear full argument, its action might be considered a determination that a new and distinct characterization of attorney disciplinary proceed-

ings exists. If this Court wishes to consider recharacterizing and to change the nature of such disciplinary proceedings, it should hear full and complete argument on the matter rather than merely refusing to note jurisdiction, thereby allowing such a decision as the one below to stand. Thus, this Court should take this case to reaffirm that attorney disciplinary proceedings are indeed the kind of proceedings in which an attorney is an accused party and therefore entitled to due process of the law, including a full and complete hearing before the tribunal which may punish him, the ability to present oral argument to that tribunal and the right to obtain the reasons for any action taken.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, this Court should accept jurisdiction of this appeal and reverse the decision below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Supreme Court, U. S.

FILED

JAN 9 1976

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IN THE

**Supreme Court of the United States**

October Term, 1975

**No. 75- 97 2**

Herbert Mildner, *Appellant,*  
*vs.*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice,  
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Department, *et al.,*  
*Appellees.*

On Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Eastern District of New York

APPENDIX TO  
JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

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January 7, 1976



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**Appendix A**  
**Opinion and Order**

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
**EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

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**74 C 1101**

**HERBERT MILDNER,**

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

**FRANK A. GULOTTA**, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, **HENRY J. LATHAM**, **J. IRWIN SHAPIRO**, **ARTHUR D. BRENNAN**, **FRED J. MUNDER**, **MARCUS G. CHRIST**, **JAMES D. HOPKINS**, **A. DAVID BENJAMIN**, **M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO**, **JOHN P. COHALAN, JR.**, individually and as Associate Justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, and **IRVING N. SELKIN**, individually and as Clerk of the Court of the State of New York, Second Department,

*Defendants.*

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**74 C 1668**

**MILTON LEVIN,**

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

**FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,**

*Defendants.*

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**74 C 1684**

**JULIUS GERZOF,**

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

**FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,**

*Defendants.*

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**Appearances:**

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Mineola, New York

By: **RICHARD LIPPE, Esq.**

For Plaintiff Mildner

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**LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ, Esq.**

Attorney General of the State of New York

By: **SAMUEL A. HIRSH, Esq.**

**A. SETH GREENWALD, Esq.**

**DANIEL M. COHEN, Esq.**

For Defendants

**NICHOLAS C. COOPER, Esq.**

Chief Counsel Judicial Inquiry

on Professional Conduct

*Amicus Curiae*



*Appendix A*

Before: MOORE, Circuit Judge, WEINSTEIN and NEAHER,  
District Judges.

NEAHER, District Judge.

These three civil rights actions were brought under 42 U.S.C. §1983 to test the constitutionality of the procedures used by the State of New York to discipline attorneys charged with professional misconduct. Each case involves an attorney who was recently disciplined by the New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department (hereinafter "Appellate Division"), thereby raising similar claims of alleged denial of due process and the equal protection of the laws. The cases were consolidated for hearing, March 12, 1975, before this three-judge district court, convened following Judge Weinstein's order of October 23, 1974, in *Mildner v. Gulotta*, in which he concluded that the case was one which must be heard and determined by a statutory court under 28 U.S.C. §2281.

Although subject matter jurisdiction exists on the basis of the pleadings and papers before us, we cannot accept the view that these plaintiff attorneys have made a case for relief here. With all respect for the Supremacy Clause, we do not construe §1983 or our constitutional question jurisdiction as authorizing an inferior federal court to pass upon the procedure employed by the State courts to discipline attorneys who practice before them or to interfere with their judgments in such matters. Nor do we read the statute as in effect inserting a new form of federal review between the appellate courts of the State and the Supreme Court of the United States.

That is not to say that disciplined attorneys have no remedy. Rather, we believe that attorneys above all should know that the State courts expound and apply the Constitution and that if they do so erroneously, the remedy is





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to apply to the Supreme Court for review. That remedy appears not to have been sought here.

In our examination of the parties' submissions we have found no substantial merit in the plaintiffs' claims and conclude that the respective complaints should be dismissed. Judge Moore is of opinion that dismissal should be upon the merits for the reasons stated in his concurrence. In my view, under prevailing standards of federalism and comity, abstention is more appropriate. Before explaining the reasons for our conclusions, a brief history of each of the disciplinary proceedings is in order, followed by our analysis of the statutory and procedural framework and the constitutional claims the plaintiffs have raised.

### **Factual Background**

#### **1. Mildner**

The background facts, as stated in Judge Weinstein's earlier order and in the complaint, do not appear to be in material dispute. Mildner, an attorney duly licensed to practice in the State since 1959, maintains a law office in Brooklyn, New York. On October 4, 1972, the Appellate Division commenced disciplinary proceedings against Mildner following an investigation by the Second Department Judicial Inquiry on Professional Misconduct. Three charges of professional misconduct were filed against him. As summarized in the Appellate Division's final decision in the case, the first charge alleged a wrongful conversion to his own use of \$17,430 entrusted to him by a personal friend, Roberta Evans, on the pretext that the money would thereby be protected from any claims by Mrs. Evans' husband in a pending divorce action. The second charge alleged that Mildner attempted to impede and obstruct the very Inquiry which investigated his conduct by attempting to persuade Mrs. Evans not to cooperate with the Inquiry,



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by inducing her to give a false statement of facts bearing on the investigation, by executing backdated promissory notes and a false affidavit in an effort to deceive the Inquiry, and by refusing to turn over certain physical evidence requested by the Inquiry. The third charge alleged that Mildner knowingly gave false testimony to the Inquiry.

On November 3, 1972, the Appellate Division designated the Hon. Albert S. McGrover, a Justice of the New York Supreme Court, as referee to hear and report on Mildner's alleged professional misconduct. Justice McGrover conducted extensive hearings on seven occasions between December 1972 and April 1973, compiling a record of more than 850 pages. In his 16-page written report of June 12, 1973, Justice McGrover found and concluded, *inter alia*, that Mrs. Evans had transferred the bulk of an inheritance from her mother's estate to Mildner "for safekeeping"; that with her consent he opened special accounts in his name to hold the funds for that purpose, giving her the passbooks; that thereafter without her knowledge he issued checks against insufficient funds for his own personal purposes which were later charged against Mrs. Evans, substantially depleting those accounts; and that Mildner's "manipulation of the funds and his failure to keep [Mrs.] Evans properly informed . . . deserves criticism." Nonetheless the referee concluded that none of the charges against Mildner had been sustained by the evidence. Thereafter cross-motions, apparently fully briefed, were made in the Appellate Division to confirm and disaffirm the report.

On January 28, 1974, that Court, in a brief opinion, granted the motion to disaffirm the report and denied Mildner's motion to confirm after stating:

"In our opinion, contrary to the report, all three charges are fully sustained by the proof."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *In re Mildner*, 43 App. Div. 2d 350, 351, 352 N.Y.S.2d 13, 14 (2nd Dep't 1974).



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The Court went on to suspend Mildner for a period of three years commencing March 1, 1974, after adding:

"In view of all the circumstances indicated by the record and considering the respondent's evident lack of candor and contrition, it is our opinion that suspension from the practice of law for a period of three years would be a suitable and appropriate discipline to be imposed upon the respondent."<sup>2</sup>

On March 7, 1974, the Appellate Division denied various motions by Mildner for a stay of the effective date of the suspension, leave to appeal, or reargument on the quantum of punishment imposed by the court. A motion was then made in the Court of Appeals seeking leave to appeal to that Court on three grounds: (1) a denial of due process in that the suspension order had been based on recanted testimony of an admitted perjured witness; (2) error in the Appellate Division's reversal of the referee's findings; and (3) a failure to establish the charges as a matter of law. This motion, fully briefed by both sides, was denied without opinion. *In re Mildner*, 34 N.Y.2d 516, 357 N.Y.S.2d 1025 (May 9, 1974).

This action was filed July 25, 1974, and the Appellate Division stayed Mildner's suspension until November 1, 1974. Judge Weinstein's order of October 23, 1974, further stayed the suspension order until this court was convened. The stay has continued in effect since the hearing on March 12, 1975, pending determination of the action by this court.

Mildner raises several constitutional claims here. In his complaint, he alleges the deprivation of a valuable property right and privilege—his license to practice law and thereby earn a living, as well as his professional reputation—in violation of his rights to due process and

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2. *Id.*



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the equal protection of the laws. The due process claim is grounded on the alleged failure of the State of New York to provide him an appeal as of right from the court of original jurisdiction in disciplinary proceedings. He adds that a denial of equal protection grows out of the fact that at least one appeal as of right from the court of original jurisdiction or determination of an administrative body is afforded all other litigants and every other person in the State of New York except disciplined attorneys.

Mildner also alleges a denial of due process in that his suspension was allegedly based on a record which lacked sufficient evidence to support the determination, and that the suspension was in connection with a matter involving a person with whom he was not in an attorney-client relationship. Finally, Mildner adds that the three-year suspension imposed was cruel and unusual punishment under the circumstances.

**2. Levin**

Plaintiff, Milton Levin, is an attorney admitted to the Bar of the State of New York in 1934. On November 17, 1971, the Appellate Division appointed Solomon A. Klein, Esq., to institute and prosecute a disciplinary proceeding against Levin on charges stemming from a 1970 Second Department inquiry conducted by Hon. Charles W. Froessel ("Froessel inquiry"), into the activities of former State Supreme Court Justice Michael M. D'Auria. During the Froessel inquiry, Levin had discussed with investigators certain transactions between D'Auria and his (Levin's) real estate partner, Maurice Gruber, had produced various documents, and had given testimony before the inquiry. The disciplinary petition, formally filed on April 18, 1972, charged that Levin had testified falsely when he stated that \$30,000 in bonds transferred to D'Auria in 1967 was a loan, alleging that it was in reality part payment of a legal fee





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to D'Auria rendered in connection with a zoning application in Plainview, New York. With respect to Levin's production of documents, the petition charged that four admittedly backdated documents—a deed, a blank acknowledgment of it, a promissory note, and one relating to a boat—were false and submitted deliberately to obstruct the inquiry.

On October 24, 1972, the Appellate Division designated the Hon. Morton B. Silberman, Justice of the New York Supreme Court, as referee to hear and report on Levin's alleged professional misconduct. Justice Silberman conducted extensive hearings on ten different days during December 1972 and January 1973. Following submission of post-hearing memoranda and oral argument, Justice Silberman concluded, in his 25-page written report dated August 31, 1973, that Levin was innocent of both charges, as they were not sustained by the evidence. Thereafter cross-motions, apparently fully briefed, were made in the Appellate Division to confirm and disaffirm the report. Levin's request for oral argument on the motions was denied.

On September 9, 1974, the Appellate Division, on the basis of the hearing and report of Justice Silberman, ruled upon the motions as follows:

“In our opinion, contrary to the report, the first charge, insofar as it relates to a document dated March 6, 1967 involving the transfer of a Chris Craft boat, was sustained by the evidence. The reporting Justice's findings with respect to the remainder of the first charge and with respect to the second charge are confirmed.”<sup>3</sup>

The Court thereupon ordered Levin suspended from the practice of law for three years.

3. *In re Levin*, 45 App. Div. 2d 455, 359 N.Y.S.2d 77, 78 (2nd Dep't 1974).



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On October 21, 1974, Levin sought leave to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals from the suspension order, a stay pending determination of the motion for leave to appeal, and an appeal as of right on the ground that his case presented substantial constitutional questions. Following the granting of an interim stay and the filing of Klein's fully briefed opposition, the Court of Appeals, on November 20, 1974, denied without opinion Levin's motions, including apparently the request for an appeal as of right. 35 N.Y.2d 643, 362 N.Y.S.2d 1026 (1974).

This action was commenced on November 25, 1974. On December 16, 1974, Levin's motions for a temporary restraining order and the convening of a three-judge court were granted by Judge Weinstein. On December 19, 1974, the statutory court designated to hear *Mildner v. Gulotta* was designated to hear this case as well. The stay has continued in effect since the hearing on March 12, 1975, pending determination of the action by this court.

The constitutional claims Levin raises here are not dissimilar to Mildner's. The first is that New York Judiciary Law, §90, violates the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment because, unlike all other professionals licensed by the State of New York, it affords an attorney no appeal as of right from an adverse decision in an attorney disciplinary proceeding. The other claims are all that §90 violates the due process clause in various ways: it allows discipline to be imposed by the trier of fact without hearing the parties, observing the demeanor of the parties or witnesses, or hearing oral arguments of counsel; it empowers the Appellate Division, as trier of fact, to impose discipline without rendering a written statement of the evidence it relied upon or the reasons for its order, and without making any written findings of fact; and lastly, it empowers the Appellate Division to impose discipline on the basis of no evidence. In sum-



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mary, Levin adds that he has been and will be deprived of valuable property rights, privileges or immunities (including his license to practice law and his professional reputation) in violation of the United States Constitution.

**3. Gerzof**

Plaintiff, Julius Gerzof, is an attorney admitted to the Bar of the State of New York in 1936. On April 18, 1972, the Appellate Division instituted disciplinary proceedings against him.

Two charges of professional misconduct were filed against Gerzof, also relating to the Froessel investigation of Justice D'Auria. As summarized by the Appellate Division in its final decision in the case, the first charge was soliciting and advising two other attorneys to reduce their legal fee on a zoning application so as to make available a sum of money to be used improperly to assure the granting of the applications. The second charge was that of testifying falsely at a Judicial Inquiry, where Gerzof denied committing the above solicitation.

On October 24, 1972, the Appellate Division designated the Hon. Morton B. Silberman, Justice of the New York Supreme Court, as referee to hear and report on Gerzof's alleged professional misconduct. Justice Silberman filed a report and a supplemental report in September 1973, after holding hearings on the charges against Gerzof, in which he concluded both charges had been sustained by the evidence. Thereafter cross-motions were made in the Appellate Division to confirm and disaffirm the report. Concluding that both charges were sustained by the evidence, that Court, on September 9, 1974, summarily confirmed the report and suspended Gerzof from the practice of law for a period of three years. *In re Gerzof*, 45 App. Div. 2d 450, 359 N.Y.S.2d 76 (1974).



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Leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals and a stay were thereafter denied by the Appellate Division. The order of suspension was extended, however, to allow Gerzof to seek such leave from the Court of Appeals. Following the granting of an interim stay and full briefing of the motion in the Court of Appeals, that Court, on November 21, 1974, denied Gerzof's motions.

This action was commenced on November 27, 1974. On December 4, 1974, Gerzof's motions for a temporary restraining order and the convening of a three-judge court were granted. On December 19, 1974, the statutory court designated to hear *Mildner v. Gulotta* was designated to hear this case. The stay has continued in effect since the hearing on March 12, 1975, pending determination of the action by this court.

Among the several constitutional claims Gerzof raises here, his basic due process and equal protection claim, arising out of a denial of an appeal as of right from the court of original jurisdiction, is identical to Mildner's. His second claim is a further due process and equal protection assertion that his suspension was based upon a record insufficient as a matter of law to sustain the determination made against him. Finally, as in Mildner's case, Gerzof claims his three-year suspension, under all the circumstances, to be cruel and unusual punishment.

Mildner, Levin and Gerzof seek substantially the same relief here: a declaration that the State disciplinary procedure deprived them of constitutional rights and injunctive relief permanently enjoining defendants from suspending them from the practice of law in this State.





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### The New York Disciplinary Procedure

The basic statutory framework which underlies attorney disciplinary proceedings is New York Judiciary Law §90, the relevant portions of which are set forth in the margin.<sup>4</sup> Attorneys licensed to practice in this State are officers of the New York Supreme Court, and the statute contemplates that the four Appellate Divisions of that Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction in their respective Judicial Departments to say what constitutes professional misconduct. *Erie County Water Authority v. Western New York Water Co.*, 304 N.Y. 342, 107 N.E.2d 479, *cert. denied*, 344 U.S. 892 (1952). Suspension or removal of an attorney

4. "§90. Admission to and removal from practice by appellate division; character committees

\* \* \*

"2. The supreme court shall have power and control over attorneys and counsellors-at-law and all persons practicing or assuming to practice law, and the appellate division of the supreme court in each department is authorized to censure, suspend from practice or remove from office any attorney and counsellor-at-law admitted to practice who is guilty of professional misconduct, malpractice, fraud, deceit, crime or misdemeanor, or any conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and the appellate division of the supreme court is hereby authorized to revoke such admission for any misrepresentation or suppression of any information in connection with the application for admission to practice.

"It shall be the duty of the appellate division to insert in each order of suspension or removal hereafter rendered a provision which shall command the attorney and counsellor-at-law thereafter to desist and refrain from the practice of law in any form, either as principal or as agent, clerk or employee of another. In addition it shall forbid the performance of any of the following acts, to wit:

"a. The appearance as an attorney or counsellor-at-law before any court, judge, justice, board, commission or other public authority.

(footnote continued on next page)



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by any Appellate Division operates as a suspension or removal in every court of the State. N.Y. Judiciary Law §90(3).

Subsection 6 of §90 makes quite clear the obligation placed upon an Appellate Division to comply with procedural due process by, where possible, requiring personal delivery to the accused attorney of a copy of the charges against him, and allowing him an opportunity to be heard in his defense. The statute does not specify the nature and form of such hearing, or even who may conduct it. There is no doubt, however, that the ultimate responsibility for

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"b. The giving to another of an opinion as to the law or its application, or of any advice in relation thereto.

"In case of suspension only, the order may limit the command to the period of time within which such suspension shall continue, and if justice so requires may further limit the scope thereof.

"If an attorney and counsellor-at-law has been heretofore removed from office, the appellate division shall upon application of any attorney and counsellor-at-law, or of any incorporated bar association, and upon such notice to the respondent as may be required, amend the order of removal by adding thereto as a part thereof, provisions similar to those required to be inserted in orders hereafter made.

"If a certified copy of such order or of such amended order, be served upon the attorney and counsellor-at-law suspended or removed from office, a violation thereof may be punished as a contempt of court.

\* \* \*

"6. Before an attorney or counsellor-at-law is suspended or removed as prescribed in this section, a copy of the charges against him must be delivered to him personally within or without the state or, in case it is established to the satisfaction of the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to which the charges have been presented, that he cannot with due diligence be served personally, the same may be served upon him by mail, publication or otherwise as the said presiding justice may direct, and he must be allowed an oppor-

*(footnote continued on next page)*



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adjudicating disciplinary proceedings rests with the several Appellate Divisions, subject only to limited appeal to the New York Court of Appeals in certain classes of cases.

Subsection 8 of §90 expressly provides that either petitioner or respondent may appeal as of right from a final Appellate Division order in a disciplinary proceeding "upon questions of law involved therein," subject only to certain limitations on the appellate jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals in the New York Constitution, Article 6, §3.<sup>5</sup> Under those limitations the present practice appears to be

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tunity of being heard in his defense. In all cases where the charges are served in any manner other than personally, and the attorney and counsellor-at-law so served does not appear, an application may be made by such attorney or in his behalf to the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to whom the charges were presented at any time within one year after the rendition of the judgment, or final order of suspension or removal, and upon good cause shown and upon such terms as may be deemed just by such presiding justice, such attorney and counsellor-at-law must be allowed to defend himself against such charges.

"The justices of the appellate division in any judicial department, or a majority of them, may make an order directing the expenses of any disciplinary proceedings, and the necessary costs and disbursements of the petitioner in prosecuting such charges, including the expense of any preliminary investigation in relation to professional conduct of an attorney and counsellor-at-law, to be paid by the county treasurer of a county within the judicial department, which expenses shall be a charge upon such county.

\* \* \*

"8. Any petitioner or respondent in a disciplinary proceeding against an attorney or counsellor-at-law under this section, including a bar association or any other corporation or association, shall have the right to appeal to the court of appeals from a final order of any appellate division in such proceedings upon questions of law involved therein, subject to the limitations prescribed by article six, section seven, of the constitution of this state."

5. Previously Article 6, §7.



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that, for cases such as these, decided originally and unanimously by the Appellate Division, an appeal as of right exists only when there is directly involved the construction of the constitution of this State or of the United States, CPLR §5601(b)(1). Otherwise, appeal is by permission of the Appellate Division or the Court of Appeals, CPLR §5602(a). See *Javits v. Stephens*, 382 F. Supp. 131, 140-42 (S.D.N.Y. 1974). And the Court of Appeals has construed "directly involved" not to include due process questions arising out of the Appellate Division decision and not "necessarily involved in the decision of the case." *Id.* at 142. See *Fryberger v. N. W. Harris Company, Inc.*, 273 N.Y. 115, 6 N.E.2d 398 (1937); cf. *Matter of Levy*, 255 N.Y. 223, 174 N.E. 461 (1931).

Under the current rules of the Appellate Division, Second Department, that Court normally institutes disciplinary proceedings upon the recommendation of a duly constituted joint bar association grievance committee, which has the power to conduct a preliminary inquiry into a specific complaint of professional misconduct. See Rules of the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department §691.4 (McKinney Supp. 1975).

It appears to be a long-standing practice of the Appellate Division, once formal disciplinary proceedings are instituted, to refer the proceedings to a referee to hear and report.<sup>6</sup> Referees appear to be of two types, although their powers seem to be roughly coextensive. The first is the Official Referee, as denominated in the Judiciary Law §§114, *et seq.* The second is the Referee to Inquire and Report, CPLR §§4001, 4201, 4212, 4320. In either case the

6. See *In re Jones*, 159 App. Div. 782, 145 N.Y.S. 65 (1st Dep't 1913), where in denying an attorney's request that an Official Referee appointed to hear and report be removed, the Court stated that "he was appointed an official referee, under the provisions of the law, to whom this court was authorized to refer proceedings of this character." *Id.*, 145 N.Y.S. at 66.





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referee conducts a hearing, and thereafter files a report which sets forth his findings of fact and conclusions of law thereon. Following the filing of the transcript and his report with the Appellate Division, that Court, upon motion of either party, or on its own initiative, may confirm or disaffirm the report in whole or in part, may make new findings with or without taking additional testimony, and may order a new hearing. CPLR §4403. *Cf.* CPLR §5501(c); Weinstein-Korn-Miller ¶5501.20.

These statutory provisions have led to holdings to the effect that findings and conclusions by the referee in disciplinary proceedings are in no way binding on the Appellate Division, which must itself determine whether or not the charges have been sustained. *E.g., In re Broome*, 13 App. Div. 2d 657, 213 N.Y.S.2d 821, 822 (2d Dep't), *rev'd on other grounds*, 10 N.Y.2d 942, 224 N.Y.S.2d 21, 179 N.E.2d 942 (1961). This does not mean, however, that the referee's findings and conclusions are inconsequential. Since he has the opportunity to observe the witnesses and determine credibility, his decision is entitled to serious consideration by the Appellate Division. *In re Gondelman*, 258 App. Div. 1085, 18 N.Y.S.2d 52 (2d Dep't), *modified on other grounds*, 259 App. Div. 889, 20 N.Y.S.2d 410, *aff'd*, 285 N.Y. 624, 33 N.E.2d 553 (1941). But even on credibility questions, the Appellate Division may, and has, substituted its judgment on occasion for that of the referee. *E.g., In re Kahn*, 38 App. Div. 2d 115, 123, 328 N.Y.S.2d 87, 95-96 (1st Dep't), *aff'd*, 31 N.Y.2d 752, 338 N.Y.S.2d 434, 290 N.E.2d 435 (1972).

A few other points about the procedures used in disciplinary cases are worthy of note. First, rejection of the referee's findings need not be predicated on the conclusion that they were clearly erroneous. Second, on the motions to confirm and disaffirm, there does not appear to be any obligation to afford an oral hearing or oral argument con-



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cerning adoption, modification, or rejection of the report. Third, in practice, if not in law, there appears to be no obligation on the Appellate Division to make appropriate findings or state its reasons when it does not agree with the referee. It appears that all that is deemed necessary in this regard is a summary statement reaching an opposite conclusion of law as to whether a particular charge was sustained by the evidence adduced at the hearing. Fourth, as a referee appointed to hear and report, the referee has no power to *determine*;<sup>7</sup> in particular, he has no power to dismiss the charges, even if he should find them unsupported by the evidence. See *In re O'Neill*, 184 App. Div. 75, 80, 171 N.Y.S. 514 (1st Dep't 1918).

### Plaintiffs' Constitutional Claims

To put the claims raised here in proper perspective, it is necessary to focus more closely on the precise nature of attorney disciplinary proceedings. We have been instructed, in somewhat cryptic fashion, that they are "of a quasi-criminal nature." *In re Buffalo*, 390 U.S. 544, 551 (1968); *Erdmann v. Stevens*, 458 F.2d 1205, 1210 (2 Cir. 1972). As previously indicated, we must view disciplinary proceedings as *judicial* rather than administrative in nature. *Id.* at 1208-09.

Perhaps the most important element of such proceedings, and that which gives them their unique status, is the universal recognition that the same court before whom attorneys, acting as its officers, are admitted and practice is the tribunal which must sit in judgment of charges of professional misconduct against them. There can be no doubt about such a court's inherent power of autonomous

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7. See CPLR §4301, *et seq.*



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control over the conduct of its officers.<sup>8</sup> Disciplinary proceedings, while perhaps susceptible to such a label as "quasi-criminal" or to such a terse description as "comparable to a criminal rather than to a civil proceeding," *id.*, 458 F.2d at 1209, are in reality neither. *In re Ming*, 469 F.2d 1352, 1353 (7 Cir. 1972). As the *Ming* court put it,

"[s]uch proceedings are not lawsuits between parties litigant but rather are in the nature of an inquest or inquiry as to the conduct of the respondent. They are not for the purpose of punishment, but rather seek to determine the fitness of an officer of the court to continue in that capacity and to protect the courts and the public from the official ministrations of persons unfit

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8. The point was well summarized by the Second Circuit in *Erdmann*:

"The court alone admits an applicant to practice before it. Thereupon he becomes an officer of the court. The power to discipline, like the power to admit an applicant to membership of the bar, rests exclusively with the court. *Theard v. United States*, 354 U.S. 278, 77 S.Ct. 1274, 1 L.Ed.2d 1342 (1957); *People ex rel. Karlin v. Culkin*, 248 N.Y. 465, 162 N.E. 487 (1928). The nature of the relationship between the court and attorneys admitted to practice before it was summarized by Justice Frankfurter, speaking for a unanimous court in *Theard*:

"The two judicial systems of courts, the state judiciaries and the federal judiciary, have autonomous control over the conduct of their officers, among whom, in the present context, lawyers are included. The court's control over a lawyer's professional life derives from his relation to the responsibilities of a court. The matter was compendiously put by Mr. Justice Cardozo, while Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals. 'Membership in the bar is a privilege burdened with conditions' (*Matter of Rouss*, 221 N.Y. 81, 84, 116 N.E. 782, 783). The appellant was received into that ancient fellowship for something more than private gain. He became an officer of the court, and, like the court itself, an instrument or agency to advance the ends of justice.' *People ex rel. Karlin v. Culkin*, 248 N.Y. 465, 470-471, 162 N.E. 487, 489. (354 U.S. 278, 281, 77 S.Ct. 1274, 1276, 1 L.Ed.2d 1342.)" 458 F.2d at 1208-09.



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to practice. *Ex parte Wall*, 107 U.S. 265, 2 S.Ct. 569, 27 L. Ed. 552 (1882). Thus the real question at issue in a disbarment proceeding is the public interest and an attorney's right to continue to practice a profession imbued with public trust. *In re Fisher*, 179 F.2d 361 (7th Cir. 1950), cert. denied sub nom. *Kerner, et al. v. Fisher*, 340 U.S. 825, 71 S.Ct. 59, 95 L. Ed. 606 (1950).'' *Id.*

Of course the public interest in a professional and ethical bar is not the only interest at stake in disciplinary proceedings. The sanctions involved can amount to loss of livelihood and professional reputation. See *Erdmann v. Stevens*, *supra*, 458 F.2d at 1209-10; *In re Ming*, *supra*, 469 F.2d at 1355. These are such drastic consequences for the individual attorney that the State's power to divest one of a license to practice law may not abrogate federally protected rights. *Erdmann v. Stevens*, *supra*, 458 F.2d at 1210; *In re Ming*, *supra*, 469 F.2d at 1355. See *Johnson v. Avery*, 393 U.S. 483, 490 n. 11 (1969). *Cf. Goss v. Lopez*, 95 S.Ct. 729, 736 (1975).

At the same time, however, the license to practice law in a particular State is so local in nature, even to the point of localized admission to practice before the various courts, that federal constitutional standards have not altered the traditionally wide discretion afforded State courts "in the establishment and application of standards of professional conduct and moral character to be observed by their court officers." *Erdmann v. Stevens*, *supra*, 458 F.2d at 1210. See also *Tang v. Appellate Division*, 498 F.2d 138, 143 (2 Cir. 1973). This deference arises out of a recognition of the special relationship between the attorney and the court which grants him a license to practice before it, so well summarized by Judge McMahon:

"The intimate and delicate relationship between courts and lawyers has long justified the judiciary's





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careful scrutiny of the integrity and qualifications of those who practice before it. Thus, it would be peculiar, if not unreasonable, for the New York Legislature to place responsibility for disciplining attorneys and review of disciplinary proceedings elsewhere than in the courts. No other body is as well qualified or as interested in determining whether an attorney is qualified to practice law." *Javits v. Stevens, supra*, 382 F. Supp. at 141.

This analysis of the situation has not changed with the passage of time. As Mr. Chief Justice Marshall perceived it over a century and a half ago:

"On one hand, the profession of an attorney is of great importance to an individual, and the prosperity of his whole life may depend on its exercise. The right to exercise it ought not to be lightly or capriciously taken from him. On the other, it is extremely desirable that the respectability of the bar should be maintained, and that its harmony with the bench should be preserved. For these objects, some controlling power, some discretion, ought to reside in the Court. This discretion ought to be exercised with great moderation and judgment; but it must be exercised; and no other tribunal can decide, in a case of removal from the bar, with the same means of information as the Court itself. If there be a revising tribunal, which possesses controlling authority, that tribunal will always feel the delicacy of interposing its authority, and would do so only in a plain case.

• • •

"The power is one which ought to be exercised with great caution, but which is, we think, incidental to all Courts, and is necessary for the preservation of decorum, and for the respectability of the profession."

CHAPTER IV

around the city of the capital and the surrounding  
districts were the most fertile and the most  
valuable. The soil was rich and the climate  
was healthy. The people were industrious and  
the government was wise. The country was  
prosperous and the people were happy.

The people of the capital and the surrounding  
districts were the most fertile and the most  
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*Ex parte Burr*, 22 U.S. (9 Wheat.) 529, 530-31 (1824); see *Ex parte Garland*, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 333, 378 (1867).

**1. The Equal Protection Claim**

As we understand this claim, the alleged differing treatment is the denial to disciplined attorneys of the right to the full scope of appellate review afforded to all other "litigants," and, in particular, all other "professionals" whose licenses to practice are revoked or suspended. There is no dispute that appeals as of right are quite limited in attorney disciplinary cases. Since the Appellate Divisions sit as courts of original jurisdiction in these cases, they cannot act in their traditional or more usual capacity as the court of primary appellate jurisdiction. In fact, as all parties stressed at oral argument, when the Appellate Division acted on the referees' reports, it was *not* functioning in an appellate capacity. Instead, the Court of Appeals is the sole court of appellate jurisdiction in these cases, and is so as of right only for certain cases or questions as summarized above. In contrast, decisions which find other New York licensed professionals guilty of professional misconduct are subject to much broader appellate review.<sup>9</sup>

While it is true that where the right to an appeal is afforded some litigants and capriciously and arbitrarily denied to others, there is a violation of the Equal Protection

9. As pointed out in Appendix C to Levin's Brief, the New York Board of Regents, under N.Y. Education Law §6510(3), acts as the statutory trier-of-fact in all cases involving charges of professional misconduct of physicians, chiropractors, engineers, accountants and other licensed professionals covered by Education Law §§6500, *et seq.* Review of such decisions lies with the Appellate Division, Third Department, pursuant to CPLR, Article 78. N.Y. Education Law §6510(4). Article 78 provides for review by the court of, *inter alia*, determinations affected by an error of law, CPLR §7803(3), or not supported by substantial evidence on the entire record, CPLR §7803(4).



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Clause, *Lindsey v. Normet*, 405 U.S. 56, 77 (1972), identification of differing treatment is only the beginning of an equal protection inquiry. There must be recognition that, in disciplining professionals, the State may legitimately find reason to conclude that differing procedural safeguards are appropriate for different professions. See *Semler v. Oregon State Board of Dental Examiners*, 294 U.S. 608, 610-11 (1935); *Pordum v. Board of Regents of State of New York*, 491 F.2d 1281, 1286 (2 Cir. 1974). Thus there is no equal protection problem when the denial of appellate rights to attorneys to the same extent afforded other professionals or litigants is reasonable, resting "upon some ground of difference having a fair and substantial relation to the object of the legislation, so that all persons similarly circumstanced shall be treated alike."<sup>10</sup>

We have no difficulty finding this standard of constitutionality adequately met in this case. We agree with the reasoning of Judge McMahon in *Javits, supra*, wherein he concluded there was no denial of equal protection in New York's failure to make Article 78 review proceedings available to attorneys. The claim here is no more than another facet of the one made in *Javits*; it makes no difference whether one focuses on the disparity itself or on the various means of redressing it.

As described above, the discipline of attorneys is a special responsibility which, ultimately, must rest with the courts. The New York legislature has decided that it is best for the judicial body which licenses attorneys to function also in situations where the right to continued use of that license is properly called into question. Thus, the vesting of original jurisdiction with the Appellate Divisions over disciplinary matters is of itself no denial of equal protection.

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10. *Javits v. Stevens, supra*, 382 F. Supp. at 140, quoting from *F. S. Royster Guano Co. v. Virginia*, 253 U.S. 412, 415 (1920).



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Nor is the denial of an appeal as of right on all questions of law or fact arbitrary or capricious. Having vested the initial determination function with the courts rather than an administrative agency, the legislature might well have concluded that the obligatory judicial review normally—if not presumptively—required for administrative decisions was not required when the *initial* determination was by a court.<sup>11</sup> The legislature has apparently concluded that when there is no division of opinion among the several Appellate Division judges who rule finally on a disciplinary matter, the Appellate Division's findings and conclusions, to the extent they do not involve constitutional questions, are to be conclusive, at least to the extent the losing party is unable to convince either the Court of Appeals or the appropriate Appellate Division to afford a discretionary appeal.

While the plaintiffs have made much of the unfairness of this approach as opposed to the arguable wisdom of some procedure that would afford a fuller appellate review, the Equal Protection Clause was not meant to strike down legislative classifications that are merely unwise, improvident or capable of improvement. Here the legislature may well have concluded it was necessary to entrust the grave responsibility for final adjudications of what constitutes professional misconduct to a judicial body in the first instance, and to provide a forum of no less stature than the Appellate Division. And the legislature has required the Court of Appeals, consistent with its constitutional limitations in other cases, as well as its crowded docket, to provide obligatory review of such final decisions only to the extent previously indicated. In sum, the judicial bodies

11. See K. Davis, *Administrative Law Text* §28.02 (presumption of reviewability of administrative action), §16.03 (outlining the distinctions between appellate review of judicial action and judicial review of administrative action) (1972).





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best suited to finally adjudicate the issues that arise in cases of this nature do just that in a manner that could by no stretch of logic be called arbitrary or capricious. We agree with the court in *Javits* that there is no violation of equal protection in the procedure adopted by New York for the review of disciplinary proceedings. 382 F. Supp. at 141.

**2. The Due Process Claim**

Plaintiffs challenge the Appellate Division's procedures under Judiciary Law §90 as constitutionally defective in failing to afford accused attorneys a full, fair and meaningful opportunity to be heard by the statutory trier-of-fact. More specifically, they complain (1) that beyond submission of written briefs, there is no opportunity to have the parties or witnesses heard by the body charged with the adjudicative responsibility; (2) there is no requirement, when a referee's conclusion exonerating an attorney is summarily disaffirmed, that either the reasons for disaffirmance be stated or that written findings of fact be made by that court; and (3) there is no appeal as of right from an adverse decision of the court of original jurisdiction. These defects in procedure they claim brought about their suspensions on the basis of no evidence.

All of the criticized features appear to be present in disciplinary procedures in the Second Department, which are ostensibly conducted in compliance with §90(6) of the Judiciary Law. Section 90, we note, is plainly not unconstitutional on its face and does, in fact, appear to comport with traditional notions of due process. The critical question is whether it can truly be said that any of those procedural features operates to deny accused attorneys a fundamentally fair hearing of the charges against them, thereby resulting in an unconstitutional application of the statute. We think not.



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First, while we agree that the opportunity to hear and observe the demeanor of witnesses is an essential element in the weighing and appraising of testimony, see *Wingo v. Wedding*, 94 S.Ct. 2842, 2850 (1974), its importance diminishes when facts are developed and inferences may be drawn without reference to credibility. As already pointed out, a disciplinary proceeding is not a full-blown trial but an inquest—a gathering of facts concerning the *conduct* of an attorney, a subject more likely to be illuminated by the evidence of the attorney's own acts than by what is said or not said by someone else. The referee's report in the *Mildner* case exemplifies the precise situation in which the documented evidence of the attorney's questionable financial transactions with another's money far outweighed the vacillating testimony of the complaining victim.

Nor, in our opinion, is it constitutionally required that the Appellate Division as final arbiter of the facts have personally heard the accused attorneys or other witnesses or have allowed oral argument upon the motions to confirm or disaffirm the referees' reports. The use of masters or referees as advisory triers-of-fact is a well-established instrument of busy appellate courts exercising original jurisdiction. The Supreme Court itself utilizes the practice when disputed factual issues appear in original actions. R. Stern & E. Gressman, *Supreme Court Practice*, Sec. 10.12 at 407-08 (4th ed. 1969). Although oral argument to the Court is allowed on the master's report in such matters, *id.*, this is not ordinarily the case in disbarment proceedings. See *In re Capshaw*, 65 S.Ct. 673 (1945), and 67 S.Ct. 1345 (1947); *In re Crow*, 359 U.S. 1007, 1008 (1959) (Douglas, J., dissenting opn.); Stern & Gressman, *supra*, Sec. 19.5.

Second, with respect to the criticism that the court provided no reasons or new findings in overruling the referees in the *Mildner* and *Levin* cases, we have not been referred



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to and are unaware of any authority for the proposition that the absence of such a statement in a *judicial* context offends due process. The rule in administrative law cases, many of which are cited by plaintiffs,<sup>12</sup> is of little help in disciplinary proceedings. Special factors applying to administrative proceedings which call for a written statement of findings and reasons are not present here. See K. Davis, *Administrative Law Text* §§16.03, 16.07 (1972).

However terse the Appellate Division's decisions in these cases, they made it clear that that Court disagreed with the respective referees' ultimate conclusions in *Mildner* and *Levin* as to what the compiled evidence showed on the issue of professional misconduct—a mixed question of law and fact as to which the Appellate Division is the statutory arbiter. That the final decision was adverse to the attorneys is not evidence that the court reached it in a manner incompatible with due process.

Third, with respect to the criticized denial of appeal as of right, there is abundant authority for the proposition that outright denial or abridgment of independent, obligatory appellate review of judicial decisions is not a denial of due process. If this is so even in criminal cases,<sup>13</sup> it is *a fortiori* so in "quasi-criminal" cases such as these, *Javits v. Stevens, supra*, 382 F. Supp. at 140.

Finally, as to the claim of suspension on the basis of no evidence, we agree with the Attorney General that it ap-

12. See *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970) (statement of reasons in welfare benefit termination decisions); *Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471, 489 (1972) (similar statement in parole revocation decisions); *United States ex rel. Johnson v. Chairman, New York State Board of Parole*, 363 F. Supp. 416, 419 (E.D.N.Y. 1973) (denial of parole); *Miller v. Iowa State ASCS Committee*, 374 F. Supp. 415, 419 (S.D. Iowa 1974) (termination of employment of government employees). See also *Thomas v. Ward*, 374 F. Supp. 206, 211 (M.D.N.C. 1974).

13. See authorities collected in *Javits v. Stevens, supra*, 382 F. Supp. at 140 n. 29.



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pears to be an attempt to relitigate the merits of the State proceedings. Into that area we may not intrude. As Judge McMahon aptly noted in *Javits v. Stevens, supra*, a review of State court proceedings for possible constitutional error lies exclusively in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. 382 F. Supp. at 137. More specifically, §1983 does not extend the right to relitigate in a federal district court *evidentiary* questions which have been adjudicated on the merits in State proceedings, upon the claim that there was no evidence to support the State action. *Wood v. Strickland*, 95 S.Ct. 992, 1001-03 (1975).

We would therefore reject those claims raised in the *Mildner* and *Gerzof* complaints which suggest that the lack of evidentiary basis for the decisions was itself a denial of due process or equal protection, or constituted, when the resultant discipline was decreed, cruel and unusual punishment. See, e.g., *MacKay v. Nesbett*, 412 F.2d 846 (9 Cir.), *cert. denied*, 396 U.S. 960 (1969); *Jones v. Husle*, 391 F.2d 198 (8 Cir.), *cert. denied*, 393 U.S. 889 (1968); *Ginger v. Circuit Court*, 372 F.2d 621 (6 Cir.), *cert. denied*, 387 U.S. 935 (1967); *In re Rhodes*, 370 F.2d 411 (8 Cir.), *cert. denied*, 386 U.S. 999 (1967); *Clark v. State of Washington*, 366 F.2d 678 (9 Cir. 1966); *Gately v. Sutton*, 310 F.2d 107 (10 Cir. 1962); *Saier v. State Bar of Michigan*, 293 F.2d 756 (6 Cir.), *cert. denied*, 368 U.S. 947 (1961).

### Abstention

As noted at the outset, and for the reasons outlined, these cases, in the writer's opinion, especially call for dismissal on the ground of abstention. I find additional support for this conclusion in the Court's reasoning in *Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, 95 S.Ct. 1200 (1975). Read narrowly, that case held that the standards stated in *Younger v.*





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*Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971), must be met to justify federal intervention in a State judicial proceeding as to which a losing litigant has not exhausted his State appellate remedies. Subsequent cases leave no doubt that this decision reaches pending New York disciplinary proceedings. *Anonymous v. Association of the Bar of the City of New York*, 515 F.2d 427 (2 Cir.), petition for cert. filed, 44 U.S.L.W. 3005 (U.S. July 2, 1975) (No. 75-10); *Anonymous J. v. Bar Association of Erie County*, 515 F.2d 435 (2 Cir.), petition for cert. filed, 44 U.S.L.W. 3001 (U.S. June 26, 1975) (No. 74-1642).<sup>14</sup> See also *Wallace v. Kern*, Dkt. No. 75-2069, slip op. 4545, 4556-57 (2 Cir. June 30, 1975).

I do not agree with plaintiffs' contention that these cases are readily distinguishable from the principles enunciated in *Huffman* simply because the disciplinary proceedings involved here are no longer "pending" at some level of the State courts. Had all the claims raised here been raised in the State courts—which they apparently were not—and finally decided adversely to plaintiffs, a direct appeal would lie as a matter of right to the United States Supreme Court under 28 U.S.C. §1257(2). *Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, *supra*, 95 S.Ct. at 1209. Moreover, issuing a stay of a final judgment of a State court is at least as significant an intrusion into State matters as enjoining prosecution of disciplinary proceedings prior to judgment. See 95 S.Ct. at 1210. In noting that the standards of *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971), may not be avoided by simply failing to perfect an appeal, *Huffman* also makes clear that the exhaustion doctrine makes no exception for those who avoid raising constitutional issues the State courts are empowered—indeed obliged—to consider. See 95 S.Ct. at 1211 n. 22.

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14. This result had been settled law in this Circuit even prior to *Huffman*. *Erdmann v. Stevens*, *supra*.



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Plaintiffs also argue, not without some force, that their constitutional claims concerning denial of an appeal as of right were hardly ripe until obligatory review had in fact been denied by the New York Court of Appeals. They question the need of justice or requiring them to make what they believe to be futile motions for reargument on the constitutional claims such a denial raised. Even a timely motion for reargument would be raising a "new point" of which the parties could not be assured consideration.<sup>15</sup> But any properly raised challenge to Judiciary Law §90—short of an express refusal by the Court of Appeals to reach the issue<sup>16</sup>—would support an appeal to the Supreme Court under 28 U.S.C. §1257(2), even if the claims were not explicitly rejected by the Court of Appeals. See R. Stern & E. Grossman, *Supreme Court Practice*, Sec. 3.4 at 85 (4th ed. 1969).

While plaintiffs' arguments are not without attraction, I am persuaded that close analysis of *Huffman* and other authorities mandates abstention in each of these cases. In *Huffman*, appellee Pursue, Ltd., was a defendant in a State court nuisance proceeding, brought under the Ohio public nuisance statute by the county sheriff and prosecuting attorney, appellants Huffman, *et al.*, for the display of allegedly obscene films. Pursue lost at the trial court level and failed to appeal, electing instead to proceed as a plaintiff in the federal district court under 42 U.S.C. §1983, attacking the constitutionality of the nuisance statute on First Amendment grounds. In reversing the three-judge district court's decision granting Pursue injunctive relief, the Court held that even though the State trial court's decision had obviously become final and nonappealable,

"the District Court should have applied the tests laid down in *Younger* in determining whether to proceed to

15. Within 90 days of the court's decision. Rule 500.9(b) of the Rules of the New York Court of Appeals.

16. See *Garrity v. New Jersey*, 385 U.S. 493, 495-96 (1967).



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the merits of appellee's prayer for relief \* \* \*." 95 S.Ct. at 1209-10.

*Huffman* must thus be read as holding that federal plaintiffs who actually are involuntary State defendants, and who have a constitutional defense arising out of State actions, cannot resort to a federal forum prior to seeking a State resolution of the merits of their constitutional claim. It is therefore apparent that the *Huffman* and *Anonymous* cases, *supra*, are not distinguishable merely because an appeal is no longer pending in the State courts in any of these cases.

It might be thought that this reasoning is inapplicable to the situation here, where the constitutional claim goes to the adequacy of the very procedures to which we would otherwise defer. The argument is not without factual support in the *Huffman* and *Anonymous* cases,<sup>17</sup> but must be rejected here. In so concluding, I consider *Gibson v. Berryhill*, 411 U.S. 564 (1973), and *Lombard v. Board of Education*, 502 F.2d 631, 636 (2d Cir. 1974), *cert. denied*, 95 S.Ct. 1400 (1975), to be inapposite.

*Gibson* involved a due process claim of bias in an administrative tribunal. The Court held that resort to the federal courts during the pendency of the administrative proceedings was not precluded by *Younger*, where the competency of the tribunal was the predicate of the constitutional (due process) issue involved. As the Court noted, *Younger* abstention "presupposes the opportunity to raise and have timely decided by a competent state tribunal the federal issues involved." 411 U.S. at 577. Subsequently, however, the Court strongly suggested that the result in *Gibson* turned primarily upon the fact that the proceedings

17. The constitutional claim in *Huffman* is outlined in the text, *supra*. In both *Anonymous* cases, the constitutional claim was whether the Fifth Amendment permits the use of an attorney's immunized grand jury testimony as a basis for disciplinary proceedings.





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were *administrative* in nature. See *Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, *supra*, 95 S.Ct. at 1203; *Anonymous v. Association of the Bar of the City of New York*, *supra*, 515 F.2d at 432-33 n. 3.

Here the proceedings in the State courts, as they were in *Huffman*, are undeniably *judicial* in nature, *Erdmann v. Stevens*, *supra*, 458 F.2d at 1208-09, an important feature of the exhaustion requirement. In *Huffman* the Court, citing the Supremacy Clause, rejected any suggestion that in judicial proceedings "state judges will not be faithful to their constitutional responsibilities." 95 S.Ct. at 1211; see *Anonymous v. Association of the Bar of the City of New York*, *supra*, 515 F.2d at 435. This conclusion has even more force when the claim here, unlike *Gibson*, is not one of actual bias in the State judiciary or proceedings, but one of procedural inadequacy. We see no reason why State court judges are not competent to pass on the constitutionality of their own procedures, including a claimed unfair denial of obligatory review.

*Lombard*, *supra*, another pre-*Huffman* case, applied the principle that 42 U.S.C. §1983 provides a "federal remedy supplementary to the state remedy, and the latter need not be first sought and refused before the federal one is invoked," citing *Monroe v. Pape*, 365 U.S. 167, 183 (1961). *Lombard*, a dismissed probationary employee, had elected in the first instance to bring an Article 78, CPLR, proceeding in the State courts, seeking reinstatement as a teacher. Following an adverse decision on the merits, which became final after his appeal, *Lombard* brought his §1983 action in the federal courts, raising for the first time procedural due process issues not dissimilar to those raised here.

*Lombard's* situation is thus distinguishable from the attorneys in the instant cases only in the sense that *Lombard* was not an involuntary State defendant but a voluntary plaintiff who made his own election to preserve his federal



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claims for a federal forum. But as indicated above, I read *Huffman* as having made this distinction crucial; as a defendant in a State proceeding, the only way Pursue could "preserve" its federal claim was to raise it in the State forum. As the dissent noted, "the mere filing of a complaint against a potential §1983 litigant forces him to exhaust state remedies." *Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd., supra*, 95 S.Ct. at 1216 (Brennan, J., dissenting); see *id.*, 95 S.Ct. at 1211 n. 21. Moreover, *Lombard* did not deal with the *Younger* abstention issue itself, but only with the broader question of whether or not Lombard's failure to raise the constitutional claims in the State forum precluded his raising them in the federal forum on grounds of waiver, collateral estoppel, or res judicata.<sup>18</sup>

In concluding that we ought to abstain in these cases I am not unmindful that it would be more expeditious for all concerned if this court, now well familiarized with the issues raised, were to rule on the merits of the claims, from which a direct appeal to the Supreme Court would lie, 28 U.S.C. §1253, *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 95 S.Ct. 1278, 1281 (1975), rather than relegate plaintiffs to State remedies which may no longer exist. But expedience cannot overcome the principle that, for sound policy reasons tied to the unique and peculiarly State-oriented function attorney disciplinary proceedings serve, *Erdmann v. Stevens, supra*, 458 F.2d at 1210; *Anonymous v. Association of the Bar of the City of New York, supra*, 515 F.2d at 432, the federal courts must be extraordinarily reluctant to interject themselves into such proceedings. Therefore, although agreeing that the plaintiffs' constitutional claims are without merit,

18. Indeed, as the court pointed out, Lombard did the right thing if he preferred a federal forum to litigate his federal claims, for had he raised them in the State courts and lost, he could not relitigate them in the federal forum. 502 F.2d at 636-37, citing *Thistlethwaite v. City of New York*, 497 F.2d 339 (2 Cir. 1974).



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I believe these cases call for the application of the *Younger* abstention rule and should be dismissed on that ground.

The Clerk is directed to enter judgment dismissing the complaints. Since serious procedural and substantive issues are presented, we unanimously agree that the stays previously entered will be continued pending disposition on appeals.

So ORDERED.

/s/ LEONARD P. MOORE

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U. S. C. J.

/s/ EDWARD R. NEAHER

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U. S. D. J.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York  
October 9, 1975

## CHAPTER I

I have been thinking much lately of the old days, and of the people who were with me then. It seems so long ago now, and yet so close. The things that happened to us are so vivid in my mind, and I feel as if I could see them all again. I am sure that you will find many of the same feelings in your own life. We have all lived through so much, and we have all learned so much. I hope that you will find some of the same lessons that I have learned. I am sure that you will find many of the same feelings in your own life.

Yours truly,

W. L. G.

1887

W. L. G.

1887

W. L. G.

1887

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**MOORE, Circuit Judge, concurring.**

I agree that the complaints herein should be dismissed, but I would dismiss on the merits and hold that New York's procedures for disciplining its attorneys are constitutional for the reasons stated in Judge Neaher's opinion.

The issues presented for court review are clear but the path towards their resolution may be beset by procedural road blocks. However, where the destination to be reached is so apparent, courts should be sufficiently flexible not to be thwarted by procedural technicalities. As previously stated, the case came before Judge Weinstein as a single Judge. He could have held that plaintiffs' complaints presented no issue ripe for federal intervention or adjudication and dismissed the complaints, which would have been appealable to the court of appeals or have held that a constitutional issue cognizable by the federal courts existed requiring the appointment of a three-judge court. Finding the latter issue present, he sought and obtained the appointment of such a court.

As that court, we have been afforded the benefit of lengthy briefs and heard oral argument by able counsel. In the present posture of the litigation we have the privilege of granting or denying the injunction requested and are assured under 28 U.S.C. §1253 that any party may appeal to the Supreme Court from an order thereon of a "district court of three judges." A possible alternative is abstention. Since the constitutional question is of sufficient importance to be resolved by our highest court, superficially it would seem to make little difference what the outcome in this court might be. However, any such nonchalant approach is quickly foreclosed by recent admonitions of the Supreme Court itself.

In *MTM, Inc. v. Barley*, 95 S.Ct. 1278 (1975), the Supreme Court considered the qualifications for appealability from a three-judge court which had been convened in a



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federal court action to enjoin enforcement of a State court injunction and to declare an Alabama nuisance statute unconstitutional. In view of the pendency of the State court action, the three-judge court applying the test of *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971), concluded that federal court intervention would be improper. Because of the pendency of the State court cases and because of the failure to show the circumstances required by *Younger* to afford an exception to its rule, the three-judge court dismissed the complaint without prejudice to the State court proceedings but gave "no opinion as to the merits of these cases." *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley, sub nom. General Corporation v. Sweeton*, 365 F. Supp. 1182 (1973).

The appellant brought the case directly to the Supreme Court under 28 U.S.C. §1253 and argued that *Younger* did not preclude relief. In its opinion *per curiam* that Court focused on the question of whether direct review under §1253 was applicable "in the absence of three-judge court decision resting on resolution of the constitutional merits of a complaint." The Court recognized that:

"The conflicting decisions of this Court on the question of whether §1253 jurisdiction attaches where a three-judge federal court fails to reach the merits of a constitutional claim for injunctive relief do not provide a consistent answer to this question." (Citing cases) (95 S.Ct. 1278, at p. 1281).

The Court had decided the previous week (March 18, 1975) *Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, 95 S.Ct. 1200, wherein it had considered at length "[t]he seriousness of federal judicial interference with state civil functions \* \* \*", *id.* at 1208, and more than suggested that in such circumstances federal courts "should abide by standards of restraint." *Id.*

Our dilemma is further complicated by such statements as "[t]he issue of whether federal courts should be able





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to interfere with ongoing state proceedings is quite distinct and separate from the issue of whether litigants are entitled to subsequent federal review of state court dispositions of federal questions." *Id.* at 1209.

The final decision in *Huffman* was to remand for consideration by the District Court to consider whether the "irreparable injury" exception of *Younger* could be shown so as to give that court jurisdiction.

Turning again to *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, we are told that "a direct appeal will be to this [the Supreme Court] Court under §1253 \* \* \* only where such order rests upon resolution of the merits of the constitutional claim presented below." (*MTM* at 1281.)

In an endeavor to analyze the effect of these decisions on the cases before us, it would seem that this three-judge court is put in the anomalous position, in order to enable the parties to appeal, of having to pass upon the merits of the constitutionality of New York's disciplinary statute in a proceeding in which federal intervention may not be permitted.

Procedural obstacles should not prevent the real issue from being decided, if possible. That issue is whether New York's authorization of the Justices of its respective Appellate Divisions to act as the disciplinary bodies over the conduct of its attorneys is unconstitutional because the prescribed procedures with respect to attorneys is different from that of other litigants, namely, as to all the features described at length by Judge Weinstein in his dissent. At this stage it would seem a needless expenditure of judicial energy to dissolve this court and remand (as in *MTM*) to the District Court "so that a fresh order may be entered and a timely appeal prosecuted to the Court of Appeals." (*MTM* at 1281.) Such courts would only be met by the same arguments which plaintiffs adequately present here.



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On remand the plaintiffs could be told that they failed specifically to claim the unconstitutionality of the State's Judiciary Law §90 procedure in their applications for leave to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals and that they had thereby deprived themselves of the opportunity to reach that court and the Supreme Court thereafter. Or the court might express the hope that they might be able to discover some procedure to start over again and ultimately to reach the Supreme Court. But why in a day when conservation of judicial effort is so important should the courts shy away from deciding the issue now before them. Despite the fact that federal intervention in a State's disciplinary procedures with respect to its attorneys would seem inappropriate, the talismanic words of *Younger* "irreparable injury" may be sufficient to justify a consideration of this case on its own merits.



*Appendix A*

**Dissenting Memorandum**  
**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
**EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

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**74 C 1101**

HERBERT MILDNER,

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, HENRY J. LATHAM, J. IRWIN SHAPIRO, ARTHUR D. BRENNAN, FRED J. MUNDER, MARCUS G. CHRIST, JAMES D. HOPKINS, A. DAVID BENJAMIN, M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO, JOHN P. COHALAN, JR., individually and as Associate Justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, and IRVING N. SELKIN, individually and as Clerk of the Court of the State of New York, Second Department,

*Defendants.*

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**74 C 1668**

MILTON LEVIN,

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, *et al.*,

*Defendants.*

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**74 C 1684**

JULIUS GERZOF,

*Plaintiff,*

*against*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, *et al.*,

*Defendants.*



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**Appearances:**

**LIPPE, RUSKIN & SCHLISSEL, P.C.**

**Mincola, New York**

**By: RICHARD LIPPE**

**For Plaintiff Mildner**

**PAUL, WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON & GARRISON**

**New York, New York**

**By: SIMON H. RIFKIND**

**MARK A. BELNICK**

**For Plaintiff Levin**

**PHILLIPS, NIZER, BENJAMIN, KRIM & BALLON**

**New York, New York**

**By: ANGELO T. COMETA**

**WILLIAM R. REILLY**

**For Plaintiff Gerzof**

**LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ, Esq.**

**Attorney General of the State of New York**

**By: SAMUEL A. HIRSHOWITZ**

**A. SETH GREENWALD**

**DANIEL M. COHEN**

**For Defendants**





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WEINSTEIN, D. J.

Despite my high regard for New York's tradition in maintaining the high ethical standards of its bar, I reluctantly conclude that its disciplinary procedure is constitutionally infirm in denying attorneys the due process and equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. There is no inconsistency between fair treatment of lawyers and maintenance of the long tradition of their discipline by the courts. There is no good reason why members of the legal profession, who have done so much to protect the constitutional rights of others, should be deprived of justice with due process in hearings and appeals—rights available to all other professionals. As construed by New York courts, the statutory disciplinary procedure, Judiciary Law §90, is invalid.

### **I. New York Disciplinary Procedure**

The procedure for disciplining attorneys is fairly uniform throughout the state. The statutory provision itself is set out as Appendix A to this opinion. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in each department receives complaints against individual attorneys from Bar Associations or the Departmental Judicial Inquiry on Professional Conduct, a body appointed and staffed by the Appellate Division.

In cases warranting action, the Appellate Division refers the charges to a referee. In the Second Department the referee is a Justice of the State Supreme Court; in other departments the referee may be an attorney. He hears the matter and reports his determinations on the facts, but he makes no findings, for he has no power to decide. In New York terminology, he is a referee to "hear and report," not to "hear and determine." The parties



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then make motions before the Appellate Division to affirm or disaffirm the referee's findings. They, according to testimony before us, submit briefs, but the Appellate Division does not take new evidence or hear oral argument. The usual practice, so far as this record shows, is to rule—whether in conformity with, or opposition to, the referee's findings—without giving any reason for decision. Punishment may vary from censure to total disbarment with its concomitant loss of the right to practice law.

Following a suspension or disbarment order from the Appellate Division, attorneys involved in disciplinary proceedings are afforded an appeal as of right to the New York Court of Appeals only with respect to issues of law which the Court of Appeals finds directly involve the construction of the state or federal constitutions or apparently in a case in which an Appellate Division Justice dissents. See New York Constitution, Article 6, §3; CPLR 5501 *et seq.*, 5601 *et seq.* Thus, in the ordinary case, an attorney convicted of professional misconduct by the Appellate Division cannot secure any appellate review of questions of law or fact. *Matter of Flannery*, 212 N.Y. 610, 611, 106 N.E. 630 (1914).

## II. Facts

Three cases, each involving an attorney disciplined by the Appellate Division and denied the right to appeal that decision, have been consolidated in this proceeding.

### **Mildner**

Plaintiff Herbert Mildner had been practicing for some thirteen years when Roberta Evans, his long time friend, alleged that he had wrongfully converted her funds for his personal use. The Second Department Judicial Inquiry on Professional Conduct conducted an investigation. Dis-

## CHAPTER I

The first of the three main parts of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The second part is devoted to a detailed study of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The third part is devoted to a detailed study of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day.

## CHAPTER II

The first of the three main parts of the book is devoted to a general survey of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The second part is devoted to a detailed study of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day. The third part is devoted to a detailed study of the history of the world from the beginning of time to the present day.

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ciplinary proceedings were then commenced in 1972 by the Appellate Division which appointed Justice Albert McGrover, of the Supreme Court, as a referee to hear and report.

After extensive hearings, resulting in a record of more than 850 pages, Justice McGrover prepared a detailed report concluding that the charges set forth in the disciplinary proceeding petition had not been sustained. The referee based his conclusion on his evaluation of the credibility of the two main witnesses he had seen and heard. Their testimony was in substantial conflict. He credited the lawyer's version of what had occurred. Based solely on the record, the Appellate Division rejected the referee's report without stating any reasons for its disaffirmation. In a *per curiam* opinion it simply wrote: "In our opinion, contrary to the report, [the] \* \* \* charges are fully sustained by the proof." *In Re Mildner*, 43 A.D.2d 350, 351, 352 N.Y.S.2d 13, 14 (2d Dept. 1974). "[C]onsidering the respondent's evident lack of candor and contrition," *id.*, the court suspended plaintiff from the practice of law for three years.

Having obtained a stay of the order of suspension, Mr. Mildner applied to the Appellate Division for reargument or for permission to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals. That motion was denied without opinion.

The plaintiff then sought leave to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals. The application for leave to appeal was based upon three grounds: (1) that the plaintiff had been deprived of due process in that the order of suspension had been based on the recanted testimony of an admitted perjured witness; (2) that the Appellate Division had erred in reversing the findings of its referee; and (3) that as a matter of law the charges against the plaintiff had not been established. This motion was also denied without opinion. *In Re Mildner*, 34 N.Y.2d 516, 357 N.Y.S.2d 1025 (1974).



*Appendix A***Levin**

Plaintiff Milton Levin had an unblemished record since his admission to the New York bar over forty years ago. Disciplinary proceedings, formally instituted in 1972, stemmed from a 1970 Second Department inquiry conducted by Hon. Charles W. Froessel (Froessel inquiry), into the activities of former State Supreme Court Justice Michael M. D'Auria. During the Froessel inquiry, Levin had discussed with investigators certain transactions between D'Auria and his real estate partner, Maurice Gruber, had produced various documents, and had given testimony before the inquiry. The disciplinary petition charged that Levin had testified falsely when he stated that \$30,000 in bonds transferred to D'Auria in 1967 was a loan, alleging that it was in reality part payment of a legal fee to D'Auria rendered in connection with a zoning application in Plainview, New York. With respect to Levin's production of documents, the petition charged that four admittedly backdated documents—a deed, a blank acknowledgment of it, a promissory note, and one relating to a boat—were false and submitted deliberately to obstruct the inquiry.

On October 24, 1972, the Second Department appointed Morton B. Silberman, a Justice of the New York Supreme Court, as a referee to hear and report to it on these charges. Justice Silberman conducted ten days of hearings, embodied in over 1000 pages of transcript, during which he heard eleven witnesses and arguments of counsel. The written report of his findings completely exonerated Levin of all charges. Justice Silberman concluded, on the basis of a "thorough analysis of the evidence," that the charges were "supported by little more than conjecture and surmise." Report and Findings of Justice Morton B. Silberman, In the Matter of Levin, at 63 (August 31, 1973).

The Appellate Division, ignoring a request by Levin for oral argument, entered a summary decision, affirming Jus-





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tice Silberman's report in all respects except as to that portion of the false document charge involving the boat document. As to that portion, the Second Department disaffirmed in one conclusory sentence:

"In our opinion, contrary to the report, the first charge, insofar as it relates to a document dated March 6, 1967 involving the transfer of a Chris-Craft boat, was sustained by the evidence."

*In Re Levin*, 45 A.D.2d 455, 456, 359 N.Y.S.2d 77, 78 (2d Dept. 1974). On the basis of this partial disaffirmance, the Appellate Division ordered that Levin be suspended from the practice of law for three years.

Levin believed that the credibility of the parties and witnesses had been critical to a resolution of the charges against him. In fact, Referee Silberman had favorably noted Levin's demeanor, and the inconsistency in the testimony of the Froessel investigators. Report & Findings of Justice Morton Silberman, *In the Matter of Levin* at 63, 60-61. During the hearing he had also censured the prosecution's chief witness for suppressing a document and attempting to justify his action. *In Re Levin*, Transcript of Proceedings before Justice Silberman at 1051 (January 18, 1973).

Levin then moved in the New York Court of Appeals for permission to appeal and for a stay of the suspension order pending determination of his motion. Levin also claimed that he was entitled to an appeal as of right on the constitutional questions raised by his case. The Court of Appeals denied, without opinion, Levin's motion for permission to appeal. 35 N.Y.2d 643, 362 N.Y.S.2d 1026 (1974). Nor did it grant Levin any appeal as of right.



*Appendix A***Gerzof**

Plaintiff Julius Gerzof was suspended from the practice of law for a period of three years by the 1974 order of the Appellate Division, Second Department. The charges against him also related to the Froessel investigation of Justice D'Auria. Gerzof was charged with soliciting and advising two other attorneys to reduce their legal fee on a zoning application so as to make available a sum of money to be used improperly to assure the granting of the application. He was also charged with falsely denying this act while a witness under oath at the Froessel inquiry. Justice Morton B. Silberman was designated to act as referee in the proceeding against Gerzof. In a 1973 report, the referee found the charges to be substantiated by the evidence. Gerzof made application to reopen the hearing for purposes of taking additional, newly discovered, testimony. This motion was denied by the Appellate Division which thereafter affirmed Referee Silberman's report without explanation. *In the Matter of Gerzof*, 45 A.D.2d 450, 359 N.Y.S.2d 76 (2d Dept. 1974).

Gerzof claimed that the evidence was legally and factually insufficient to sustain the charges against him and that the testimony had been permeated with substantive inconsistencies. He unsuccessfully sought an appeal as of right to the Court of Appeals, leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals from the Appellate Division, and leave to appeal from the Court of Appeals. 35 N.Y.2d 644, 362 N.Y.S. 2d 1026 (1974).

Following commencement of the actions in this court seeking injunctive declaratory relief, the Appellate Division stayed commencement of plaintiffs' suspensions to permit this court to consider these cases.



**Appendix A****III. Jurisdiction****A. Defendants Are Not Immune from  
Suit Under 42 U.S.C. §1983.**

Plaintiffs seek injunctive relief against the commission of acts in violation of their civil rights by state judges acting in their official capacity. Defendants argue that they are not subject to the jurisdiction of this court because the Appellate Division is not a "person" within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. §1983, citing *Zuckerman v. Appellate Division*, 421 F.2d 625 (2d Cir. 1970).

First, *Zuckerman* has expressly been restricted by subsequent decisions to cases in which the Appellate Division is sued as a body. Where, as here, the Justices and Clerk of the Appellate Division are sued as individuals, *Zuckerman* does not apply and the federal court has jurisdiction over the defendants. *Erdmann v. Stevens*, 458 F.2d 1205, 1208 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 889, 93 S.Ct. 126, 34 L.Ed.2d 147 (1972) (and see Lumbard, J. concurring, 458 F.2d at 1214, n. 5); *Law Students Civil Rights Research Council v. Wadmond*, 299 F.Supp. 117, 123-24 (S.D.N.Y. 1969) (three judge court), *aff'd. on other grds.*, 401 U.S. 154, 91 S.Ct. 720, 27 L.Ed.2d 749 (1971).

Second, despite whatever immunity state judges may have from suits for money damages, see *Pierson v. Ray*, 386 U.S. 547, 87 S.Ct. 1213, 18 L.Ed.2d 288 (1967), they enjoy no such immunity from suits, such as those brought here, for injunctive relief under Section 1983. In *Javits v. Stevens*, 382 F.Supp. 131 (S.D.N.Y. 1974), a Section 1983 suit was brought against the Justices and Clerk of the Appellate Division. Judge MacMahon summed up the matter when he noted:

"[I]n this circuit, at least, state judges are not immune from suits for injunctive relief under §1983, and since



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plaintiffs seek only injunctive and declaratory relief, we reject defendants' immunity argument."

*Id.* at 136. See also, e.g., *Littleton v. Berbling*, 468 F.2d 389, 395-409 (7th Cir. 1972), *rev'd. on other grds. sub nom. O'Shea v. Littleton*, 414 U.S. 488, 94 S.Ct. 669, 38 L.Ed.2d 674, *vacated*, *Spomer v. Littleton*, 414 U.S. 514, 94 S.Ct. 685, 38 L.Ed.2d 694 (1974); *Wallace v. McDonald*, 369 F. Supp. 180, 188 (E.D.N.Y. 1973); *Law Students Civil Rights Research Council v. Wadmond*, 299 F.Supp. 117, 123 (S.D. N.Y. 1969) (three judge court), *aff'd on other grds.*, 401 U.S. 154, 91 S.Ct. 720, 27 L.Ed.2d 749 (1971).

#### **B. Plaintiffs' Actions Are Not Barred by Principles of Res Judicata, Collateral Estoppel, Waiver or Comity.**

Plaintiffs, in attacking the constitutionality of the New York attorney disciplinary statute, raise issues not previously determined by the state courts. Defendants argue that plaintiffs are seeking to relitigate constitutional questions that were before the state court or that might have been raised. It is clear from the record that the constitutional questions before us were not raised before the referees or the Appellate Division in any of these cases. Motions made for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals did not challenge the statute's constitutionality.

The principles of res judicata, collateral estoppel, or some special form of comity adverted to by a majority of the panel in *Tang v. Appellate Division*, 487 F.2d 138 (2d Cir. 1973), *cert. denied*, 416 U.S. 906, 94 S.Ct. 1611, 40 L.Ed. 2d 111 (1974), have no application. In *Tang* the plaintiff-attorney sought a federal determination of precisely the same questions that were previously decided by the state court. After being denied admission to the New York bar for failure to meet the residence requirements, Mr. Tang





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commenced a state court action challenging the constitutionality of the requirements. *Id.* at 140-41 and 141 n. 2. When the Appellate Division decided against him Mr. Tang started a Section 1983 action in the federal court, raising the same issues he had posed in his unsuccessful state action. *Tang*—at least in the majority's opinion—rested on the familiar doctrine that a state court decision on a constitutional question voluntarily submitted is conclusive between the parties until modified by appeal. *See Rooker v. Fidelity Trust Co.*, 263 U.S. 413, 44 S.Ct. 149, 68 L.Ed. 362 (1923); *England v. Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners*, 375 U.S. 411, 417-419, 84 S.Ct. 461, 466, 11 L.Ed. 2d 440 (1964); *Bricker v. Crane*, 468 F.2d 1228, 1231 (1st Cir. 1972), *cert. denied*, 410 U.S. 930, 93 S.Ct. 1368, 35 L.Ed. 2d 592 (1973).

The federal remedy under Section 1983 "is supplementary to the state remedy, and the latter need not be first sought and refused before the federal one is invoked." *Monroe v. Pape*, 365 U.S. 167, 183, 81 S.Ct. 473, 482, 5 L.Ed.2d 492 (1961). *See also McNeese v. Board of Education*, 373 U.S. 668, 671-672, 83 S.Ct. 1433, 1435-36, 10 L.Ed.2d 622 (1963). *Cf. Note, Res Judicata: Exclusive Federal Jurisdiction & The Effect of Prior State Court Determinations*, 53 Va. L. Rev. 1360 (1967). Exhaustion is not required in Section 1983 cases. *See Wilwording v. Swenson*, 404 U.S. 249, 251, 92 S.Ct. 407, 409, 30 L.Ed.2d 418 (1971) (per curiam); *Sugar v. Curtis Circulation Company*, 37 F.Supp. 1055, 1059 (S.D.N.Y. 1974). Nor is a bar raised by the fact that, theoretically, the constitutional questions these plaintiffs now present "might have been" litigated in the state proceedings. *Lombard v. Board of Education of City of New York*, 502 F.2d 631, 636 (2d Cir. 1974), *cert. denied*, U.S. , 95 S.Ct. 1400, 43 L.Ed. 2d 656 (1975). As the court stated in *Lombard*:

"To apply res judicata to a remedy which 'need not be first sought and refused' in the state court, and which



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actually was not sought would be to overrule the essence of *Monroe v. Pape* and *Lane v. Wilson*, 307 U.S. 268, 274, 59 S.Ct. 872, 83 L.Ed. 1281 (1939).''

*Id.* at 635. See also *Newman v. Board of Education of the City School Dist. of New York*, 508 F.2d 277 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, U.S. , 95 S.Ct. 1447, 43 L.Ed.2d 762 (1975).

In the *Lombard* case, a dismissed teacher unsuccessfully prosecuted two Article 78 proceedings in the state courts, during which he never specifically raised any constitutional issue. Thereafter, he instituted a Section 1983 action, claiming that he had been denied procedural due process in his dismissal as a teacher. The defendants argued that Mr. Lombard's constitutional claims were barred because he "should have raised them in [the] state proceedings". 502 F.2d at 635. The Second Circuit disagreed—expressly suggesting that no doctrine of waiver, or claim preclusion, should be applied to issues of procedural due process arising under Section 1983. 502 F.2d at 635-37.

Hence, to follow the defendants' argument in this case would be to flout governing case law and to emasculate the federal remedy provided by Section 1983. It would also deny these plaintiffs a hearing in any court on the substantial constitutional questions raised:

" 'Since under Section 1983 an individual seeks to preserve or vindicate federally guaranteed rights, a strong national interest in protecting those rights makes it incumbent upon the federal courts to avoid erecting barriers to prosecution of such suits in federal tribunals.' "

*Plano v. Baker*, 504 F.2d 595, 598 (2d Cir. 1974), quoting *Hayes v. Cape Henlopen School District*, 341 F.Supp. 823, 831 (D. Del. 1972).

# CHAPTER II

THE first of the two main divisions of the subject is the history of the art of painting. This is a subject of great importance, and one which has attracted the attention of many of the most distinguished writers of the age. It is a subject which has been treated in many different ways, and which has given rise to many different theories and opinions.

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The plaintiffs present before this court are not maneuvering to have this court review a state court disciplinary decision for its fairness. Their attack is on the constitutionality of the state statutory procedure for disciplining state attorneys. None of them has asked this federal court to review any judicial conduct or rulings in the state disciplinary proceedings against him, such as evidentiary rulings or rulings on questions of law. Nor have they challenged the tradition of court control of the bar. Rather, they have requested that the statutory procedure be declared unconstitutional. The attorneys' individual cases do, however, illustrate unconstitutional results which may result from an application of the statute.

#### **C. There Is No Disruption of State Court Proceedings.**

The defendants also suggest that this court lacks jurisdiction to interfere with state court proceedings and orders. The defendants, however, fail to distinguish between the procedural posture of this case and those in which the abstention doctrine has been applied.

Thus, in *Anonymous v. Association of the Bar*, 515 F.2d 427 (2d Cir. 1975), and in *Anonymous J. v. Bar Association*, 515 F.2d 435 (2d Cir. 1975), unlike here, the plaintiff attorneys sought to enjoin prosecution of pending state disciplinary proceedings through Section 1983 actions. The Second Circuit had rejected such an attempt, several years ago, in *Erdmann v. Stevens*, 458 F.2d 1205 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 889, 93 S.Ct. 126, 34 L.Ed 2d 147 (1972)—and simply did so again in the *Anonymous* cases, relying primarily on *Erdmann*.

The case before us is entirely different. Here there has been no attempt to enjoin prosecution of a pending state proceeding. The disciplinary proceedings against Mildner,





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Gerzof, and Levin, including the appellate process, had already been concluded prior to commencement of their federal actions.

*Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, — U.S. —, 95 S.Ct. 1200, 43 L.Ed.2d 482 (1975) is similarly inapposite. There, unlike here, the Section 1983 plaintiff made no effort to appeal in the state courts before commencing its federal action. The Supreme Court ruled only that, in such circumstances, the abstention standards of *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, 91 S.Ct. 746, 27 L.Ed.2d 669 (1971) must be met before the federal court may proceed:

“We therefore hold that *Younger* standards must be met to justify federal intervention in a state judicial proceeding as to which a losing litigant has not exhausted his state appellate remedies. \* \* \*

*Huffman v. Pursue, Ltd.*, *supra*, at —, 95 S.Ct. at 1211. In the cases consolidated here the plaintiffs had exhausted their state appellate remedies before commencing this action—lack of appellate review is, in fact, one of their chief complaints.

**D. State Court Supervision of Attorneys Is  
Subject to United States Constitution.**

The defendants contend that since the state judiciary has control over the membership of its own bar, a federal court may not interfere with attorney disciplinary proceedings. As recently pointed out in *Javits v. Stevens*, 382 F. Supp. 131, 141 (S.D.N.Y. 1974):

“The intimate and delicate relationship between courts and lawyers has long justified the judiciary’s careful scrutiny of the integrity and qualifications of those who practice before it.”

See also *Theard v. United States*, 354 U.S. 278, 281, 77 S.Ct. 1274, 1276, 1 L.Ed.2d 1342 (1957); *Erdmann v. Stevens*,





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458 F.2d 1205, 1208-09 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 899, 93 S.Ct. 126, 34 L.Ed.2d 147 (1972). But this argument confuses deference with abnegation of responsibility to enforce the Constitution. A brief incursion into the history of disciplinary proceedings may be useful in explaining how New York arrived where it is now. It will show that while New York's practice of leaving discipline to the courts accords with tradition, custom does not justify ignoring the constitutional rights of attorneys.

The New York courts do have broad power over attorneys practicing before them, inherited from the English practice followed in all American jurisdictions. As early as the thirteenth century, Parliament passed several statutes concerning rules and penalties relating to the practice of law. These were to be administered and enforced by the courts. H. Cohen, *A History of the English Bar to 1450*, 189-195 (1929).

As the bar grew, it developed into two main groups. One was the aristocratic, learned, well organized barristers who argued before the courts. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the barristers began to organize in various Inns of Court, each of which prescribed methods and periods of required training for admission to the Inn and disciplined their own members. R. Pound, *The Lawyer From Antiquity to Modern Times*, 87-88 (1958). The judges retained a supervisory or reviewing power over the various Inns, especially with regard to disbarment. See *In Re Cannon*, 206 Wis. 374, 386-387, 240 N.W. 441, 446 (1932); Pound, *supra*, at 98-100.

Attorneys, the other branch, were usually drawn from the clerks of the court and were largely unorganized until the nineteenth century. *Id.* at 86. An attorney was admitted by the individual court in whose jurisdiction he was to practice and was directly disciplined by that court. *Id.* at 100; *In Re Cannon*, 206 Wis. 374, 386, 240 N.W. 441, 446



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(1932). Although discipline was difficult to maintain, it was severe when it was effected. For example, the taking of a contingent fee was ground for disbarment and negligence in handling a case resulted in the lawyer being sent to prison. Cohen, *A History of the English Bar to 1450*, 234 (1929). Thus, the English courts supervised the largely self-disciplined barristers and directly disciplined attorneys.

This tradition of court supervision was followed in the colonies. The first recorded legislation concerning the practice of law was adopted in 1642-43 in Virginia. This statute provided that no attorney could plead a case without a license from the court. R. Pound, *The Lawyer From Antiquity to Modern Times*, 136-137 (1953). Early colonial statutes, like the English ones, were drafted in very broad terms, often accomplishing little more than acknowledging the courts' responsibility for supervision of attorneys. *Id.* at 135-42.

Following the Revolution, disciplinary proceedings were rare and occurred only in extreme cases. *Id.* at 185. Nevertheless, during the period from the Revolution to the Civil War, some disbarment cases reached the Supreme Court. In *Ex Parte Burr*, 22 U.S. (9 Wheat) 529, 531 (1824) the Court discussed a lower court's power to discipline lawyers:

"The power is one which ought to be exercised with great caution, but which is, we think, incidental to all Courts, and is necessary for the preservation of decorum, and for the respectability of the profession."

The extent of the discretion of the disciplining court is more clearly enunciated in *Ex Parte Secombe*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 9 (1856) where the Court discussed its own unreported 1829 decision in *Tillinghast v. Conkling*. In *Tillinghast*, a District Court had disbarred the petitioner and the



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Supreme Court held it had no jurisdiction, but it warned that the bar's right to its dignity and to a proper judicial proceeding before discipline was imposed could not be ignored.

"[I]n a court of that character, the relations between the court and the attorneys and counsellors who practice in it, and their respective rights and duties, are regulated by the common law. And it has been well settled, by the rules and practice of common-law courts, that it rests exclusively with the court to determine who is qualified to become one of its officers, as an attorney and counsellor, and for what cause he ought to be removed. *The power, however, is not an arbitrary and despotic one, to be exercised at the pleasure of the court, or from passion, prejudice, or personal hostility; but it is the duty of the court to exercise and regulate it by a sound and just judicial discretion, whereby the rights and independence of the bar may be scrupulously guarded and maintained by the court, as the rights and dignity of the court itself.*" (Emphasis added.)

*Id.* at 13.

After the Civil War the court reaffirmed the authority of courts over attorneys as necessary to ensure the profession's integrity. *See, e.g., Randall v. Brigham*, 74 U.S. (7 Wall.) 523 (1868); *Ex Parte Garland*, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 333 (1866). It recognized that state and federal courts have autonomous disciplinary authority over the conduct of the lawyers that practice before them. *See, e.g., In Re Ruffalo*, 390 U.S. 544, 88 S.Ct. 1222, 20 L.Ed.2d 117, *reh. denied*, 391 U.S. 961, 88 S.Ct. 1833, 20 L.Ed.2d 874 (1968); *Theard v. United States*, 354 U.S. 278, 77 S.Ct. 1274, 1 L. Ed.2d 1342 (1957); *Ginger v. Circuit Court for City of Wayne*, 372 F.2d 621 (6th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 387 U.S. 935,





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87 S.Ct. 2061, 18 L.Ed.2d 998 (1967); *Jones v. Hulse*, 391 F.2d 198 (8th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 393 U.S. 889, 89 S.Ct. 206, 21 L.Ed.2d 167 (1968). Normally, the federal courts will follow state disciplinary decisions since they rely upon the state's thoroughly developed admission and disciplinary apparatus. *Selling v. Radford*, 243 U.S. 46, 50-51, 37 S.Ct. 377, 378-379, 61 L.Ed. 585 (1917). *Cf. In Re Abrams*, slip op. 75-1029 (3d Cir. 1975).

State legislatures have attempted to assume direct control over attorneys, including the passage of laws dictating individuals' admission to the bar. The courts have struck down such legislative interference. *See, e.g., In Re Splane*, 123 Pa. 526, 16 A. 481 (1889) (statute requiring that attorney admitted in one court be deemed admitted in all courts invalidated as beyond the power of the legislature to compel the courts to admit anyone as an attorney); *In Re Cannon*, 206 Wis. 374, 240 N.W. 441 (1932) (statute ordering court to reinstate lawyer it had previously suspended held invalid as an infringement on the inherent powers of the court).

The assertiveness by the courts in this area combined with the growth of bar associations interested in professional ethics led to the development of more formalized procedures for discipline. In 1970 the American Bar Association published a major study of state disciplinary procedures. American Bar Association, *Problems and Recommendations in Disciplinary Enforcement* (1970) (Clark Report). The Clark report urged that only courts should regulate admission and disbarment and that any legislative interference was an unconstitutional invasion of the prerogative of a coordinate branch of government. *Id.* at 10-18.

Section 90 of the New York Judiciary Law is in tune with these legal traditions, for it specifically states that such proceedings are the province of the courts. The stat-





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ute has been construed as a reaffirmation and restatement of inherent judicial power. Thus, *In Re Anonymous*, 21 A.D. 2d 48, 51, 248 N.Y.S.2d 368, 372 (1st Dept. 1964), an action to suspend an attorney on grounds of mental deficiency, noted:

"The statute is 'declaratory of a jurisdiction that would have been implied.' The sense of the opinion by Chief Judge Cardozo in the *Karlin* case [*People ex rel. Karlin v. Culkin*, 248 N.Y. 465, 162 N.E. 487 (1928)] is that the court has very broad inherent powers of supervision and that the statute is not restrictive but expressive of that power." (citations omitted.)

See also *Jones v. Hulsc*, 391 F.2d 198 (8th Cir.), cert. denied, 393 U.S. 889, 89 S.Ct. 206, 21 L.Ed.2d 167 (1968).

Although the State of New York may properly delegate the enforcement of attorney discipline to the judiciary, it may not sidestep constitutional guarantees. As the Supreme Court stated in *Johnson v. Avery*, 393 U.S. 483, 490 n. 11, 89 S.Ct. 747, 751 n. 11, 21 L.Ed.2d 718 (1969):

"The power of the States to control the practice of law cannot be exercised so as to abrogate federally protected rights."

See also, *Ex Parte Secombe*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 9, 13 (1956); *In Re Fisher*, 179 F.2d 361, 369 (7th Cir. 1950), cert. denied sub nom. *Kerner v. Fisher*, 340 U.S. 825, 71 S.Ct. 59, 95 L.Ed. 606 (1950) ("The courts must not exercise their supervisory control in an arbitrary manner, but must show a legal discretion in the exercise thereof."); *Staud v. Stewart*, 366 F.Supp. 1398, 1401 (E.D. Pa. 1973); *In Re Mackay*, 416 P.2d 823 (Alaska 1965), cert. denied, 384 U.S. 1003, 86 S.Ct. 1907, 16 L.Ed.2d 1016 (1966). See also *Spevack v. Klein*, 385 U.S. 511, 87 S.Ct. 625, 17 L.Ed.2d 574 (1967) (on certiori from state court: discipline could not be



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predicated solely on the lawyer's exercise of his Fifth Amendment right to refuse to testify or produce records at a disciplinary hearing). *Cf. Schware v. Board of Bar Examiners*, 353 U.S. 232, 77 S.Ct. 752, 1 L.Ed.2d 796 (1957) (unconstitutional denial of admission); *Konigsberg v. State Bar of California*, 353 U.S. 252, 77 S.Ct. 722, 1 L.Ed.2d 810, *reh. denied*, 354 U.S. 927, 77 S.Ct. 1374, 1 L.Ed.2d 1441 (1957).

Hence the New York statute, codifying judicial power to discipline attorneys, is not immune from attack. Plaintiffs in the instant case have sued the defendants as the state officers charged with administering and enforcing the challenged statute; they are seeking an injunction restraining the defendants from enforcing that statute. This was precisely the relief sought against the same defendants with respect to the state statute in *Law Students Civil Rights Research Council v. Wadmond*, 299 F.Supp. 117 (S.D.N.Y. 1969) (three-judge court), *aff'd on other grds.*, 401 U.S. 154, 91 S.Ct. 720, 27 L.Ed.2d 749 (1971). There the court found that the Appellate Division judges could be enjoined from enforcing an unconstitutional state statute dealing with the bar. Any citizen, including a disciplined attorney, who is allegedly deprived of rights protected by the Constitution, can seek review in a federal court. As the court stated in *Law Students*, *supra*, 299 F.Supp. at 123:

"We fail to perceive what interest would be served by holding federal courts to be powerless to enjoin state officers from acting under a statute that allegedly deprives citizens of rights protected by the Civil Rights Act or promulgating regulations that are alleged to have that result simply because some of them are robbed and others have been appointed by those who are."



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Disciplinary proceedings may be particularly susceptible to abuse because of their summary character. Lyman, *State Bar Discipline & The Activist Lawyer*, 8 Harv. Civ. Rights—Civil Lib. L. Rev. 235 (1973). "Only by providing that the social enforcement mechanism must function strictly within [Constitutional] bounds can we hope to maintain an ordered society that is also just." *Boddie v. Connecticut*, 401 U.S. 371, 375, 91 S.Ct. 780, 784, 28 L.Ed.2d 113 (1971).

## IV. Due Process

### A. The Right Generally

When an individual is faced with a criminal prosecution, strict adherence to the full panoply of due process protections is guaranteed. U. S. Const. Amends. V, XIV. In other situations, the importance of the right as well as the need of the state for summary procedures to carry out particular public policies have been balanced in determining which procedural protections must apply. See, e.g., *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 95 S.Ct. 729, 42 L.Ed.2d 725 (1975) (suspension of students); *Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471, 481, 92 S.Ct. 2593, 2600, 33 L.Ed.2d 484 (1972) (revocation of parole); *Bell v. Burson*, 402 U.S. 535, 91 S.Ct. 1586, 29 L.Ed.2d 90 (1971) (suspension of driver's license); *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254, 90 S.Ct. 1011, 25 L.Ed.2d 287 (1970) (termination of relief payment); *Willner v. Committee on Character and Fitness*, 373 U.S. 96, 102, 83 S.Ct. 1175, 1179-1180, 10 L.Ed.2d 224 (1963) (exclusion from bar); *Joint Anti-Fascist Comm. v. McGrath*, 341 U.S. 123, 71 S.Ct. 624, 95 L.Ed. 817 (1951) (listing of "subversive" organizations). Here we must determine which protections are required when the suspension or disbarment of an attorney is at stake and whether limited





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procedural protections are permitted because of the nature of the lawyer's relationship to the court.

Because due process calls for such procedural protections as the particular situation demands,

"consideration of what procedures due process may require under any set of circumstances must begin with a determination of the precise nature of the government function involved as well as of the private interest that has been affected by governmental action."

*Cafeteria & Restaurant Workers Union v. McElroy*, 367 U.S. 886, 895, 81 S.Ct. 1743, 1748-49, 6 L.Ed.2d 1230, *reh. denied*, 368 U.S. 869, 82 S.Ct. 22, 7 L.Ed.2d 70 (1961).

A determination of suspension or disbarment, capable of destroying an attorney's reputation and livelihood, can be a devastating sanction. For this reason the Supreme Court has characterized disbarment proceedings as being "of a quasi-criminal nature". *In Re Ruffalo*, 390 U.S. 544, 551, 88 S.Ct. 1222, 1226, 20 L.Ed.2d 117, *reh. denied*, 391 U.S. 961, 88 S.Ct. 1833, 20 L.Ed.2d 874 (1968). As the Second Circuit stated in *Erdmann v. Stevens*, 458 F.2d 1205, 1209-10 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 889, 93 S.Ct. 126, 34 L.Ed.2d 147 (1972):

"[I]n our view a court's disciplinary proceeding against a member of its bar is comparable to a criminal rather than a civil proceeding. \* \* \* [I]t cannot be disputed that for most attorneys the license to practice law represents their livelihood, loss of which may be a greater punishment than a monetary fine. See *Bradley v. Fisher*, 80 U.S. [13 Wall.] 335, 355, 20 L.Ed. 646 (1872); *Spevack v. Klein*, 385 U.S. 511, 516, 87 S.Ct. 625, 17 L.Ed.2d 574 (1967). Furthermore, disciplinary measures against an attorney, while posing a threat of incarceration only in cases of contempt, may threaten another serious punishment—loss of pro-





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fessional reputation. The stigma of such a loss can harm the lawyer in his community and in his client relations as well as adversely affect his ability to carry out his professional functions. \* \* \* (Emphasis supplied.)

No one, including the plaintiffs, denies that the state has an interest in orderly procedures for adjudicating attorney disciplinary proceedings. It has a responsibility "to determine the fitness of an officer of the court to continue in that capacity and to protect the courts and the public from the official ministrations of persons unfit to practice." "In *Re Ming*, 469 F.2d 1352, 1353 (7th Cir. 1972) (citations omitted). See also, *Baird v. State Bar of Arizona*, 401 U.S. 1, 7, 91 S.Ct. 702, 706, 27 L.Ed.2d 639 (1971); *Theard v. United States*, 354 U.S. 278, 281, 77 S.Ct. 1274, 1276, 1 L.Ed.2d 1342 (1957); *Ex Parte Wall*, 107 U.S. 265, 2 S.Ct. 569, 27 L.Ed. 552 (1882). The legal profession is "imbued with public trust." In *Re Echeles*, 430 F.2d 347, 350 (7th Cir. 1950). We hardly need to be reminded by the events surrounding the Watergate tragedy that much of the effectiveness of our democratic, constitutional system of government depends upon the honor and integrity of members of the bar. Particularly in the relationship of the courts to the bar, "the interest of the States in regulating lawyers is especially great since lawyers are essential to the primary governmental function of administering justice." *Goldfarb v. Virginia State Bar*, — U.S. —, 95 S.Ct. 2004, 2016, 44 L.Ed.2d 572 (1975).

If the bar is unfit and does not properly protect the rights of the public, the entire judicial system may be brought into disrepute:

"It is not enough that the doors of the temple of justice are open; it is essential that the ways of approach be kept clean."



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*Hatfield v. King*, 184 U.S. 162, 168, 22 S.Ct. 477, 479, 46 L. Ed. 481 (1902). *See also, Booth v. Fletcher*, 101 F.2d 676 (D.C. Cir. 1938), *cert. denied*, 307 U.S. 628, 59 S.Ct. 835, 83 L.Ed. 1511 (1939).

But, as already noted, New York's obligation to provide effective discipline must be weighed against the significant individual rights at stake. Due process requires that the procedures used in legal proceedings be appropriate to the case and just to the parties affected.

As Justice Goldberg commented:

"Certainly lawyers and courts should be particularly sensitive of, and have a special obligation to respect, the demands of due process."

*Willner v. Committee on Character & Fitness*, 373 U.S. 96, 106, 83 S.Ct. 1175, 1182, 10 L.Ed.2d 224 (1963) (discussing bar admission procedures in the State of New York). "[W]hen a State seeks to . . . disbar a lawyer, it must proceed according to the most exacting demands of due process of law." *Law Students Civil Rts. Res. Council, Inc. v. Wadmond*, 401 U.S. 154, 174, 91 S.Ct. 720, 731, 27 L.Ed.2d 749 (1971) (Black and Douglas, JJ., dissenting). "[I]ts members . . . should not be disciplined . . . without full and unquestioned due process of law and protection of all their constitutional rights." *Id.* at 185, 91 S.Ct. at 737.

Writing in a case where an attorney was accused of the heinous crime of participating in a lynching in front of a courthouse, Justice Field in *Ex Parte Wall*, 107 U.S. 265, 303, 2 S.Ct. 569, 601, 27 L.Ed. 552 (1883) (dissenting), reminded us:

"The power to disbar attorneys in proper cases . . . is not to be exercised arbitrarily or tyrannically. Under our institutions arbitrary power over another's lawful pursuits is not vested in any man nor in any tribunal. It is odious wherever exhibited, and nowhere



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does it appear more so than when exercised by a judicial officer towards a member of the bar practicing before him."

We turn to some of the incidents of due process claimed to be denied attorneys by the procedure used by the state in disciplining members of the bar.

### **B. Meaningful Hearing by Trier of Fact**

#### **1. Requirements of Opportunity to Be Heard**

"The fundamental requisite of due process is the opportunity to be heard." *Grannis v. Ordean*, 234 U.S. 385, 394, 34 S.Ct. 779, 783, 58 L.Ed. 1363 (1914). Particularly when a person's good name, integrity, reputation or honor is at stake because of government action, a full and fair hearing should include, at the very least, notice of the charges or complaint, disclosure of the evidence supporting the charges, and an opportunity to be heard and to confront and cross-examine witnesses. See, e.g., *Board of Regents v. Roth*, 408 U.S. 564, 573, 92 S.Ct. 2701, 2707, 33 L.Ed.2d 548 (1972); *Wisconsin v. Constantineau*, 400 U.S. 433, 437, 91 S.Ct. 507, 510, 27 L.Ed.2d 515 (1971); *Willner v. Comm. on Character & Fitness*, 373 U.S. 96, 103, 83 S.Ct. 1175, 1180, 10 L.Ed.2d 224 (1963); *Greene v. McElroy*, 360 U.S. 474, 492, 496-97, 79 S.Ct. 1400, 1411, 1413, 3 L.Ed.2d 1377 (1959).

It follows that in attorney disciplinary proceedings, due process requires a reasonable opportunity to present a defense to the trier. See, e.g., *In Re Ruffalo*, 390 U.S. 544, 88 S.Ct. 1222, 20 L.Ed.2d 117, reh. denied, 391 U.S. 961, 88 S.Ct. 1833, 20 L.Ed.2d 874 (1967); *Kivitz v. SEC*, 475 F.2d 956 (D.C. Cir. 1973); *In Re Los Angeles County Pioneer Society*, 217 F.2d 190 (9th Cir. 1954). The hearing



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"must be granted \* \* \* in a meaningful manner." *Armstrong v. Manzo*, 380 U.S. 545, 552, 85 S.Ct. 1187, 1191, 14 L.Ed.2d 62 (1965).

**a. Evaluating Credibility of Witnesses**

When the credibility of witnesses is involved, a meaningful hearing should include their appearance before the trier-of-fact so that it can observe their demeanor. As Judge Learned Hand wrote in *Dyer v. MacDougall*, 201 F.2d 265, 268-69 (2d Cir. 1952):

"It is true that the carriage, behavior, bearing, manner and appearance of a witness—in short, his 'demeanor'—is a part of the evidence. The words used are by no means all that we rely on in making up our minds about the truth of a question that arises in our ordinary affairs, and it is abundantly settled that a jury is as little confined to them as we are. They may, and indeed they should, take into consideration the whole nexus of sense impressions which they get from a witness. This we have again and again declared, and have rested our affirmance of findings of fact of a judge, or of a jury, on the hypothesis that this part of the evidence may have turned the scale. Moreover, such evidence may satisfy the tribunal, not only that the witness' testimony is not true, but that the truth is the opposite of his story; for the denial of one, who has a motive to deny, may be uttered with such hesitation, discomfort, arrogance or defiance, as to give assurance that he is fabricating, and that, if he is, there is no alternative but to assume the truth of what he denies."

The cases emphasizing the importance of demeanor as an aid to the determination of credibility are "numerous





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and well known." *United States ex rel. Graham v. Mancusi*, 457 F.2d 463, 469 (2d Cir. 1972). See also, *Emslie v. State Bar of California*, 520 P.2d 991, 995-96, 113 Cal. Rptr. 175 (1974). Cf. *Barber v. Page*, 390 U.S. 719, 725-26, 88 S.Ct. 1318, 1322, 20 L.Ed.2d 255 (1968); *Berger v. California*, 393 U.S. 314, 315, 89 S.Ct. 540, 541, 21 L.Ed.2d 508 (1969). In criminal and quasi-criminal cases, "The one who decides must hear." *Morgan v. United States*, 298 U.S. 468, 481, 56 S.Ct. 906, 912, 80 L.Ed. 1288 (1936). See also, *Lacomastic Corp. v. Parker*, 54 F.Supp. 138, 141 (D.Md. 1944) ("in judicial as distinguished from administrative proceedings, there is an inherent right on the part of litigants to have a decision rendered by the judge who presides at the trial and hears the testimony.").

Reliance of those making factual determinations on the demeanor of witnesses in assessing the truthfulness of their testimony is one of the reasons appellate courts are limited in their scope of review. In federal non-jury cases Rule 52(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that findings of fact shall not be set aside by an appellate court unless "clearly erroneous." See *United States v. United States Gypsum Co.*, 333 U.S. 364, 394-95, 68 S.Ct. 525, 541-542, 92 L.Ed. 746 (1948). The appellate court may examine all the evidence in the record, but due regard must be given to the opportunity of the trial judge to judge the credibility of the witnesses. See, e.g., *Graver Tank & Mfg. Co. v. Linde Air Products Co.*, 336 U.S. 271, 275, 69 S.Ct. 535, 537-38, 93 L.Ed. 672 (1949), *rev'd in part*, 339 U.S. 605, 70 S.Ct. 854, 94 L.Ed. 1097 (1950); *Aunt Mid., Inc. v. Fjell-Oranje Lines*, 458 F.2d 712, 716 (7th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 877, 93 S.Ct. 130, 34 L.Ed.2d 131 (1972).

Although the Appellate Division's scope of review is somewhat broader (N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5501(c)), New York practice recognizes that the trial judge is in the best position



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to evaluate evidence. He who "has seen and heard the witnesses and has opportunity to question them . . . has often an advantage over the Appellate judge who must reach his conclusion upon the written record alone." *People ex rel. MacCracken v. Miller*, 291 N.Y. 55, 61, 50 N.E.2d 542, 544 (1943).

Precedents where the trier did not hear the witnesses absent the parties consent involve pure civil and administrative adjudications. See, e.g., *De La Rama v. De La Rama*, 241 U.S. 154, 36 S.Ct. 518, 60 L.Ed. 932 (1915) (matrimonial; consent of parties); *United States v. Vater*, 259 F.2d 667 (2d Cir. 1958) (condemnation; consent by parties implied from failure to object); *Utica Mutual Insurance Company v. Vincent*, 375 F.2d 129, 131-32 (2d Cir.), cert. denied, 389 U.S. 839, 88 S.Ct. 63, 19 L.Ed.2d 102 (1967) (N.L.R.B. decision); *Lacomastic Corp. v. Parker*, 54 F.Supp. 138 (D.Md. 1944); *S. J. Charia & Co. v. United States*, 248 F.2d 124 (Customs Court 1956) (chief witness heard by deciding court).

"The trial judge has the right and duty to observe the bearing and demeanor of the witnesses, and where the evidence is conflicting, he may take these things into account. Such personal observations cannot be transferred to the printed page, and yet the judge may, and often must, give them weight in making his decision. In the present instance it is difficult to see how the judge who entered the findings had any proper opportunity to decide any question affected by the credibility of the witnesses."

*United States v. Nugent*, 100 F.2d 215, 217 (6th Cir. 1938), cert. denied sub nom. *Fidelity & Columbia Trust Co. v. United States*, 306 U.S. 648, 59 S.Ct. 591, 83 L.Ed. 1046 (1939). See also, *Smith v. Dental Products*, 168 F.2d 516, 519 (7th Cir. 1948).



*Appendix A***b. Right to Argue to Trier**

The importance of oral argument before the fact finding court to assist it in drawing inferences and evaluating probative force of the evidence cannot be underestimated. It is an essential part of the trial which may not be denied to a litigant. The Supreme Court has just re-emphasized this point in declaring unconstitutional a New York practice permitting the court to deny counsel the opportunity to make a summation at the end of a criminal case tried without a jury. *Herring v. New York*, — U.S. —, 95 S.Ct. 2550, — L.Ed.2d — (1975).

“There can be no doubt that closing argument for the defense is a basic element of the adversary factfinding process in a criminal trial. \* \* \* [T]he overwhelming weight of authority, in both federal and state courts, holds that a total denial of the opportunity for final argument in a nonjury criminal trial is a denial of the basic right of the accused to make his defense. \* \* \* [T]here can be no justification for a statute that empowers a trial judge to deny absolutely the opportunity for any closing summation at all. \* \* \* In denying the appellant this right under the authority of its statute, New York denied him the assistance of counsel that the Constitution guarantees.” (Footnotes omitted.)

*Id.* at —, —, —, and —, 95 S.Ct. at 2553, 2554, 2555, and 2556. *See, e.g., United States v. Felix Walls*, 443 F.2d 1220, 1223 (6th Cir. 1971) (“Preclusion of closing argument denied appellant the effective assistance of counsel”); *United States v. Sawyer*, 443 F.2d 712, 713 n. 5 (D.C. Cir. 1971) (“The defendant’s right to present argument is part of his Sixth Amendment right to counsel \* \* \*”); *United States ex rel. Wilcox v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 273 F.Supp. 923, 924 (E.D. Pa. 1967) (right to have counsel present legitimate argument to the fact finder is recognized





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as an essential ingredient of due process); *Williams v. Brooklyn Elevated R.R. Company*, 126 N.Y. 96, 102-103, 26 N.E. 1048 (1891) (counsel should not be prevented from exercising within the four corners of the evidence the widest latitude by way of comment, denunciation or appeal in advocating his cause); *Lyman v. Fidelity & Casualty Company*, 65 A.D. 27, 28, 72 N.Y.S. 498 (1st Dept. 1901) (court may not deprive party of the right and privilege of presenting through its counsel its own views of the conflicting evidence and questions upon which the fact finder is to pass); *People v. Marcelin*, 23 A.D.2d 368, 369-70, 260 N.Y.S. 2d 560, 561-62 (1st Dept. 1965) (the proper argument of the cause is as much a part of the trial as the hearing of evidence); Maguire, et al., *Cases and Materials on Evidence*, 1006-1007 (6th ed. 1973); Annot., *Prejudicial Effect of Trial Court's Denial, or Equivalent, of Counsel's Right to Argue Case*, 38 A.L.R.2d 1396 (1954). Even under the continental nonadversarial system, where the judge and not counsel interrogates the witnesses, oral argument by counsel is considered vital. See Damaska, *Presentation of Evidence and Factfinding Precision*, 123 U. of Pa. L. Rev. 1083, 1090 (1975). See also *id.* at 1100.

The denial of oral argument by the nisi prius court is a denial of the right to counsel under the Sixth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Since the Sixth Amendment is incorporated into the Fourteenth Amendment's right to due process, the New York attorney disciplinary practice constitutes a denial of due process. See, e.g., *Argersinger v. Hamlin*, 407 U.S. 25, 92 S.Ct. 2006, 32 L.Ed. 2d 530 (1972); *Klopfer v. North Carolina*, 386 U.S. 213, 87 S.Ct. 988, 18 L.Ed.2d 1 (1967).

At the appeals level, limiting argument may, in some cases, be justified. See *Federal Communications Com'n. v. WJR, The Goodwill Station*, 337 U.S. 265, 276, 69 S.Ct. 1097, 1103-04, 93 L.Ed. 1353 (1949). But for the proceed-





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ings to be just at the trial level, where the issues and facts, including the credibility of witnesses, must be explored fully, an opportunity for oral presentation by counsel is essential. *See Londoner v. Denver*, 210 U.S. 373, 386, 28 S.Ct. 708, 714, 52 L.Ed. 1103 (1908); K. Llewellyn, *The Common Law Tradition: Deciding Appeals* 240 (1960); Note, *Screening of Criminal Cases in the Federal Courts of Appeals: Practice and Proposals*, 73 Col. L. Rev. 77, 84 (1973).

Even at the appellate level, judges and attorneys have expressed the view that oral argument, providing the opportunity for an exchange between court and counsel, often significantly affects the decision. Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, *Structure and Internal Procedures: Recommendations for Change* 66 (1975). An impressive ninety per cent of the attorneys questioned in an extensive survey of attorney attitudes in three circuits agreed that

“judges are better able to avoid erroneous interpretations of the facts or issues in the case if they can direct questions to counsel, and that oral argument permits the attorney to address himself to those issues which the judges believe are crucial to the case.”

*Id.* at 67. In response to this data and other testimony, the Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System recommended that Congress establish a minimum national standard, applicable to each of the courts of appeals, providing that the opportunity for oral argument should be viewed as the norm. *Id.* at 68.

#### ***c. Statement of Reasons for Decision***

Minimal due process requires that a decision maker confine itself to the record, to the legal evidence adduced at the hearing, to the applicable rules of law, and to a



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sound exercise of discretion. Without any written statement from the decision maker, there is no assurance that these requirements are met.

Such an explanation is an important function of any judicial opinion. Professor Llewellyn's observation is particularly apt:

"Plainly \* \* \* [letting counsel feel that the case has been dealt with carefully and fairly] is one function and no slight one; but surely at our present juncture an equally, a more important office is *to let the winner (and incidentally the loser, and not at all incidentally, any member of the bar) get some working idea of what did the scoring for the victory.*" (Emphasis in original.)

K. Llewellyn, *The Common Law Tradition: Deciding Appeals* 290 (1960).

#### [1] Court of Original Jurisdiction

While not constitutionally applicable to the states, Rule 52(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is typical of American practice. It requires findings of fact and conclusions of law to be made in all civil actions tried upon the facts without a jury. The object is to promote care on the part of trial judges in ascertaining the facts to aid in their process of adjudication, to permit application of res judicata and estoppel of judgment, and to guide the appellate court on review. *See, e.g.,* Advisory Committee Note to Rule 52(a) (1946); *United States v. Forness*, 125 F.2d 928, 942 (2d Cir.), cert. denied sub nom. *City of Salamanca v. United States*, 316 U.S. 694, 62 S.Ct. 1293, 86 L.Ed. 1764 (1942). The trial court's findings must "afford a clear understanding of the ground upon which the court based its judgment." *Fluor Corp. v. United States ex rel. Mosher Street Co.*, 405 F.2d 823, 828 (9th Cir.), cert. denied,



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394 U.S. 1014, 89 S.Ct. 1632, 23 L.Ed.2d 40 (1969). *See also, e.g., Lemelson v. Kellogg Co.*, 440 F.2d 986, 988 (2d Cir. 1971); *Berguido v. Eastern Air Lines, Incorporated*, 369 F.2d 874, 877 (3d Cir. 1966), *cert. denied*, 390 U.S. 966, 88 S.Ct. 1194, 20 L.Ed.2d 95 (1968). As the court observed in *Russo v. Central School District No. 1*, 469 F.2d 623, 628 (2d Cir. 1972), *cert. denied*, 411 U.S. 932, 93 S.Ct. 1899, 36 L.Ed.2d 391 (1973):

“Findings that are nothing but cold rhetoric, couched in extraordinarily broad and general terms, and stripped of underlying analysis or justification or an accompanying memorandum or opinion shedding some light on the reasoning employed, invite closer scrutiny, especially when the case concerns fundamental constitutional freedoms.”

*See also, Schneiderman v. United States*, 320 U.S. 118, 129-131, 63 S.Ct. 1333, 1338-39, 87 L.Ed. 1796 (1943).

In criminal cases, when a case is tried to the court, Rule 23(c) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure provides that a defendant may request findings of fact. They “aid the defendant in presenting questions for appeal and aid the appellate court in delineating the factual bases on which the trial court’s decision rested.” *United States v. Livingston*, 459 F.2d 797, 798 (3d Cir. 1972). *See also, United States v. Johnson*, 496 F.2d 1131, 1138 (5th Cir. 1974), *cert. denied*, 420 U.S. 972, 95 S.Ct. 1391, 43 L.Ed.2d 651 (1975). The rationale for the criminal and civil rules is similar; both require the trial court to analyze the case and articulate the grounds on which it based its judgment. All judges are aware that this process sometimes convinces us that our original, tentative, conclusion was unwarranted.



*Appendix A***[2] Administrative Determinations**

Courts reviewing administrative determinations are acutely aware of the potential for abuse and the need to insure fairness and facilitate judicial review by requiring statements of fact. In *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254, 90 S.Ct. 1011, 25 L.Ed.2d 287 (1970), the Supreme Court required a state to afford a welfare recipient minimal due process before terminating his welfare benefits. The court held that minimal due process included a statement of reasons for decision:

“Finally the decisionmaker’s conclusion as to a recipient’s eligibility must rest solely on the legal rules and evidence adduced at the hearing. . . . To demonstrate compliance with this elementary requirement, *the decision maker should state the reasons for his determination and indicate the evidence he relied on*, . . . though his statement need not amount to a full opinion or even formal findings of fact and conclusions of law.”

*Id.* at 271, 90 S.Ct. at 1022 (emphasis supplied).

More recently, the Court, in *Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471, 92 S.Ct. 2593, 33 L.Ed.2d 484 (1972), ruled that a parolee has a right to a hearing before revocation of parole. The hearing should take place in two stages: a preliminary hearing to determine whether there is probable cause to believe a parole violation has been committed, and a formal revocation hearing to finally adjudicate the charge. The court required a written statement of the reasons for the action taken at each stage of the hearing:

“Our task is limited to deciding *the minimum requirements of due process*. They include . . . *a written statement by the factfinders as to the evidence relied on and reasons for revoking parole*.” (Emphasis supplied.)





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*Id.* at 488-489, 92 S.Ct. 2604. See also, *Id.* at 487, 92 S.Ct. at 2603; *United States ex rel. Johnson v. Chairman, N.Y. State Board of Parole*, 363 F.Supp. 416, 419 (E.D.N.Y. 1973), *aff'd*, 500 F.2d 925 (2d Cir. 1974) (right to written opinion when parole denied); *Miller v. Iowa State ASCS Comm.*, 374 F.Supp. 415, 421 (S.D. Iowa 1974) (reasons for involuntary termination of employment).

The New York courts have recognized the importance of stating reasons for decisions by administrative boards. In *Solari v. Vincent*, 46 A.D.2d 453, 363 N.Y.S.2d 332, (2d Dept. 1975), the Appellate Division followed Morrissey's ruling that effective judicial review of a parole release determination could not be had without a statement of reasons. In reviewing the Board of Regents determination suspending a chiropractor's license, the court in *Gold v. Nyquist*, 43 A.D.2d 617, 349 N.Y.S.2d 165 (3d Dept. 1973), found it was unable to fairly evaluate the board's determination since no findings of fact had been made. Accordingly, it remitted the matter for findings of fact.

Particularly when administrative action "touches on fundamental personal interests in life, health, and liberty," *Environmental Defense Fund v. Ruckelshaus*, 439 F.2d 584, 598 (D.C. Cir. 1971), courts have sought to protect those interests from administrative arbitrariness by requiring administrators to support their decisions by findings of fact and reasoned opinions. See, e.g., *id.* at 597.

Decision by fiat is repugnant to due process whether the decision is rendered by an administrative or judicial tribunal. As Judge Jerome Frank wrote in *United States v. Forness*, 125 F.2d 928, 942 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied sub nom. City of Salamanca v. United States*, 316 U.S. 694, 62 S.Ct. 1293, 86 L.Ed. 1764 (1942):

"The judiciary properly holds administrative officers to high standards in the discharge of the fact-finding function. The judiciary should at least measure up to the same standards."



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Any person substantially hurt by a decision should be given the opportunity to know what is in the trier's mind. Those punished deserve to know why. *See* Leflar, *Some Observations Concerning Judicial Opinions*, 61 Col. L. Rev. 810 (1961).

**[3] Appellate Review**

Traditionally, appellate courts, in well reasoned and thoughtful opinions, have apprised litigants of the court's reasons for decisions in their case and by dint of painstaking justifications, contributed to the development of the law. Reliance on this "reasonability" and "regularity" produces a viable appellate system. *See* K. Llewellyn, *The Common Law Tradition: Deciding Appeals*, 183, 195 (1960). Abandonment of this practice to adjust to demands of efficiency undercuts both public confidence and constitutional values.

Within the last decade the number of appellate cases in the federal courts has tripled. Cramton, *Federal Appellate Justice in 1973*, 59 Cornell L. Rev. 571 (1974). *See also*, Rosenberg, *Planned Flexibility to Meet Changing Needs of the Federal Appellate System*, 59 Cornell L. Rev. 576, 579 (1974). The busiest appeals court in the country is the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court sitting in Brooklyn. "Last year it disposed of 3,190 appeals, an increase of 14.3 per cent over its 1973 total." 'Realistic' Justice, N.Y. Times, March 30, 1975, at 31, col. 1. *See also*, Hopkins, *The Role of an Intermediate Appellate Court*, 41 Brooklyn L. Rev. 459 (1975).

Concern over the increased workload of the appellate courts and the resulting delay has contributed to the development of new techniques for handling cases. *See* Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, *Structure and Internal Procedures: Recommendations for Change*, 54-55 (1975). Note, *Screening of Criminal*



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Cases in the Federal Courts of Appeals: Practices and Proposals, 73 Col. L. Rev. 77 and n. 1 at 77 (1973); 'Realistic' Justice, N.Y. Times, March 30, 1975, at 31, col. 1.

One of the areas affected is the writing and publishing of judicial opinions. For example, the Committee on Use of Appellate Court Energies of the Advisory Council for Appellate Justice has proposed that "principles and procedures should be adopted that will reduce the publication of appellate opinions that are without general significance to the public, to the legal profession, or to advancing the functions of the law." Standards for Publication of Judicial Opinions, FJC Research Series No. 73-2 at 5 (August 1973).

It is, therefore, not surprising that over half the circuit courts have formulated local rules under which many cases are decided without opinion. Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System: Opinion Writing and Publication at 2 (1974). Cases decided in this manner are listed in the back of the Federal Reporter. *See, e.g.*, 503 F.2d 1396-1405 (1974). There is a great variety of procedures used to announce the result, with or without some articulation of the reasoning of the court, all of which are categorized as cases decided without opinion. Rule 21 in the Fifth Circuit provides that an opinion is not appropriate

"[w]hen the court determines that any one or more of the following circumstances exists and is dispositive of a matter submitted to the court for decision: (1) that a judgment of the district court is based on findings of fact which are not clearly erroneous; (2) that the evidence in support of a jury verdict is not insufficient; (3) that the order of an administrative agency is supported by substantial evidence on the record as a whole; (4) that no error of law appears; and the court also determines that an opinion would have no precedential value. \* \* \*"



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Many such opinions contain no mention of the issues or authorities analyzed; they merely state "Affirmed" or "Enforced." See, e.g., *Henderson v. United States Public Health Service*, 502 F.2d 1165 (5th Cir. 1974); *N.L.R.B. v. Union de Tronquistas*, 503 F.2d 1396 (1st Cir. 1974). See for an explanation of the rule, *N.L.R.B. v. Amalgamated Cloth. Wkrs. of Amer., AFL-CIO, Local 990*, 430 F.2d 966 (5th Cir. 1970).

In the Second Circuit, when the panel is unanimous in its decision to affirm and in its determination that no advantage would be achieved by the publication of an opinion, the decision is announced from the bench or by summary order. Rules of U. S. Ct. App. for the 2d Cir., Rule §0.23. This oral decision may include a brief statement of the court's reasoning.

Other procedures include a memorandum prepared specifically for the litigants, Rules of the United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, Rule 21; judgment orders in the Third Circuit, (Testimony of Chief Judge Seitz before the Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System at 39, Washington, D.C. Aug. 2, 1973), and orders which closely resemble opinions. Rules of the United States Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, Rule 28. Rules cited in Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, Opinion Writing and Publication, at 4 (1974). See Haworth, Screening & Summary Procedures in the United States Court of Appeals, 1973 Wash. Univ. L. Q. 257, 271 and n. 85-89 for an analysis of the existing rules.

It is significant that none of the Rules analyzed by Haworth permits reversals without opinion. All seem to agree that the losing litigant is entitled to know why he lost. Since the trial court must give reasons in bench trials, it can be assumed that an affirmance without opinion found the reasoning below satisfactory.





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Undoubtedly courts must deal effectively with the "flood tide" of appeals. See *Taylor v. McKeithen*, 407 U.S. 191, 196, 92 S.Ct. 1980, 1983, 32 L.Ed.2d 648 (1972) (Rehnquist, J. dissenting). But efficient procedures may not always be just. "[T]he Constitution recognizes higher values than speed and efficiency." *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645, 656, 92 S.Ct. 1208, 1215, 31 L.Ed.2d 551 (1972).

Moreover, part of the task of judicial opinions is to insure the acceptance of the system of law in the society it governs. See Leflar, *Some Observations Concerning Judicial Opinions*, 61 Col. L. Rev. 810, 812 (1961). From a narrower standpoint it is particularly desirable that the expectations of the legal community be realized. For "when your rooters stop rooting, your constituents lose ardor, and even the general public begin to mutter," a crisis of confidence may develop. K. Llewellyn, *The Common Law Tradition: Deciding Appeals* 198 (1960).

At the request of the Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System the Bureau of Social Science Research conducted a survey of a randomly selected group of attorneys, experienced in federal appellate court procedures, in the Second, Fifth and Sixth Circuits. They were asked questions designed to indicate their background, measure their feelings about the desirability of certain types of abbreviated procedures and their preference when a "trade-off" was required between various procedures. Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, *Opinion Writing & Publication* at 7 (1974). The attorneys made it clear that they considered it significant for the court to provide some rationale for the result:

"The most dramatic evidence of the importance which attorneys attach to a written record of the reason for a decision can be found in the view expressed by more than two-thirds of the attorneys surveyed that the due



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process clause of the Constitution should be held to require courts of appeals to write at least a brief statement of the reasons for their decisions."

Commission for Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, Structure & Internal Procedures: Recommendations for Change 69 (1975). If this survey is indicative of attorneys' values, there is a great risk that confidence in the judicial system may be affected by unexplained decisions.

Unquestionably the use of affirmances without opinions "is certainly not to be encouraged in other than clearly deserving cases." Haworth, *Screening & Summary Procedures in the United States Courts of Appeals*, 1973 Wash. Univ. L. Q. 257, 272. As the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit put it in *N.L.R.B. v. Amalgamated Cloth. Wkrs. of Amer. AFL-CIO, Local 990*, 430 F.2d 966, 972 (5th Cir. 1970):

"A most important function is the writing of opinions. Opinions are to serve a number of purposes at least two of which are highly significant. One is that an articulated discussion of the factors, legal, factual or both, which lead the Court to one rather than to another result, gives strength to the system, and reduces, if not eliminates, the easy temptation or tendency to ill-considered or even arbitrary action by those having the awesome power of almost final review. The second, of course, is that the very discursive statement of these articulated reasons is the thing out of which law—and particularly Judge-made law—grows. It is an essential part of the process of the creation of principles on which predictions can fairly be forecast as a basis for conduct, accountability, or the like. All Judges know that in some cases this latter factor may almost com-



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pletely transcend the importance of the case which is the vehicle bringing the questions forward."

Anything less than carefully controlled selective employment of decisions without explanations leaves litigants with the impression that the result was reached by fiat, possibly without a clear understanding of the issues by the court. Commission on the Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, Opinion Writing and Publication at 7 (1974). Concerns such as these may be dealt with more adequately if the bar is permitted to contribute to the development of intermediate court procedures. *Id.* at 11. A better safeguard would be the adoption of the Commission of Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System's recommendations for the statement of reasons in every case:

"[W]e recommend that in every case there be some record, however brief, and whatever the form, of reasoning which impelled the decision. . . . Opinions can be signed or unsigned, published or unpublished, but in each case the litigants and their attorneys would be apprised of the reasoning which underlies the conclusion of the court."

Commission on Revision of the Federal Court Appellate System, Structure and Internal Procedures: Recommendations for Change 73 (1975).

Although the Supreme Court apparently has condoned the practice of summary affirmances by deciding a case in that posture without comment (*Lego v. Twomey*, 404 U.S. 477, 482, n. 6, 92 S.Ct. 619, 623 n. 6, 30 L.Ed.2d 618 (1972); see also, *Taylor v. McKeithen*, 407 U.S. 191, 194 n.4, 92 S.Ct. 1980, 1982 n.4, 32 L.Ed.2d 648 (1972)), it has clearly expressed its dissatisfaction with summary reversals. *Taylor v. McKeithen*, *supra*, involved a challenge to the 1970 self-

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1. The first part of the report is devoted to a general description of the country, its position, its climate, its soil, its vegetation, its animals, and its population. The second part is devoted to a description of the principal towns and cities, and the third part to a description of the principal industries and occupations.

2. The first part of the report is devoted to a general description of the country, its position, its climate, its soil, its vegetation, its animals, and its population. The second part is devoted to a description of the principal towns and cities, and the third part to a description of the principal industries and occupations.

3. The first part of the report is devoted to a general description of the country, its position, its climate, its soil, its vegetation, its animals, and its population. The second part is devoted to a description of the principal towns and cities, and the third part to a description of the principal industries and occupations.

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reapportionment of the Louisiana Legislature. In a brief summary opinion the Court of Appeals reversed the District Court's findings made after holding hearings on a plan submitted by a specially appointed master. *Bussie v. McKeithen*, 457 F.2d 796 (5th Cir. 1971). The Supreme Court could not determine whether a substantial federal question existed because it was unsure of the Appellate Court's reasoning. It, therefore, vacated the judgment below and remanded the case. Although the Court recognized that courts of appeals should have wide latitude in their decisions of whether or how to write opinions, it observed:

"But here the lower court summarily reversed without any opinion on a point which had been considered at length by the District Judge."

407 U.S. 191, 194, n.4, 92 S.Ct. 1980, 1982, n.4, 32 L.Ed.2d 648 (1972).

New York, so long a leader in judicial administration and the protection of human rights, recognizes the importance of an explanation of appellate decisions in all civil cases. N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5522, as well as predecessor provisions, has provided that, "A court reversing or modifying a judgment or order without opinion shall briefly state the grounds of its decision." In 1975 the requirement was broadened to cover every appeal by adding the word "affirming." 1975 Session Laws of N.Y., ch. 407. We are reliably informed that the New York Court of Appeals has adopted the same practice for itself for criminal appeals. Since, however, the decisions in disbarment cases by the Appellate Division are not, technically, appeals, the Appellate Division was not bound to follow N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5522 in construing Section 90 of the Judiciary Law.





*Appendix A***2. Failure of New York Procedure to Meet  
Minimum Standards of Due Process**

From the discussion of the law and the facts, it is apparent that, as interpreted by the New York courts, Section 90 of the Judiciary Law denies due process to attorneys disciplined by the Appellate Division. The trier, Appellate Division, decides the facts without hearing the witnesses and without the opportunity to determine credibility by observing them testify; it denies counsel the opportunity to orally argue the merits of the case; and it fails to give reasons for its decision, even when it rejects the report of the referees who have heard the witnesses.

In each of the proceedings consolidated in this case, the attorney was afforded a meaningful hearing—but only before the appointed referee to hear and report. The referee—the only judge to see the witnesses and pass on their demeanor—did not decide the case. In contrast, the Appellate Division, sitting as the court of original jurisdiction, acted without hearing the testimony, viewing the parties, observing the confrontation of the witnesses, or listening to arguments of counsel.

It has been suggested that the referee in these proceedings was in fact a “court” even though he sat only as an agent of the Appellate Division. The implication is that the Appellate Division performs a *de facto* reviewing function on a motion to confirm or disaffirm its referee’s report. But this is clearly not the case.

First, although the Appellate Division has power to review questions of fact on appeal from the decision of a court in a non-jury case, it must attach considerable weight to the trial court’s judgment. As the New York Court of Appeals put it in *People ex rel. MacCracken v. Miller*, 291 N.Y. 55, 61, 50 N.E.2d 542, 544 (1943):

“In all cases the appellate court in appraising the weight of evidence must recognize that its power to



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reverse a finding of the trial court is not unlimited, and that the Trial Judge who has seen and heard the witnesses and has opportunity to question them and to guide the course of the trial, has often an advantage over the Appellate Judge who must reach his conclusion upon the written record alone. So this court has pointed out that, however broad may be the statutory grant of power to the Appellate Division to determine an appeal upon the merits both as to matters of law and fact, its 'power to reverse a finding of fact may be exercised only in accordance with the general rules of law regulating appeals to that court. It may not set aside a finding of value made at Special Term, unless such finding is based upon erroneous theory of law or erroneous ruling in the admission or exclusion of evidence, or unless it appears that the court at Special Term has failed to give to conflicting evidence the relative weight which it should have and thus has arrived at a value which is excessive or inadequate.' "

More recently, in *Collins v. Wilson*, 40 A.D.2d 750, 751, 337 N.Y.S.2d 541, 542 (4th Dept. 1972), the Appellate Division declared:

*"We should not disturb findings based upon conflicting evidence and involving credibility of witnesses unless it is obvious that the court's conclusion could not be reached by any fair interpretation of the evidence."*

See also, e.g., *Billington v. State*, 33 A.D.2d 822, 823, 305 N.Y.S.2d 737, 739 (3d Dept. 1969).

In the case of professional misconduct by physicians, chiropractors, engineers and all others covered by New York Education Law Sections 6500, 8208, review by the Appellate Division is limited by the substantial evidence test as to the facts determined by the Board of Regents. N. Y. Educ. Law §6510(4); see, e.g., *Matter of Tompkins v. Bd.*



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of *Regents*, 299 N.Y. 469, 474, 87 N.E.2d 517 (1949); *Corwin v. Nyquist*, 37 A.D.2d 656, 322 N.Y.S.2d 405, 407 (3d Dept. 1971).

By contrast, the decision of a referee to hear and report, such as the referee in an attorney disciplinary proceeding, is in no way binding upon the Appellate Division. It is free to substitute its own views and findings for those proposed by the referee, for it, not the referee, is the original trier. See, e.g., *Matter of Gehr v. Bd. of Education of City of Yonkers*, 304 N.Y. 436, 440, 118 N.Y.S.2d 108, N.E.2d 371 (1952); *In Re Broome*, 13 A.D.2d 657, 213 N.Y.S.2d 821, 822-23 (2d Dept.), *rev'd on other grds.*, 10 N.Y.2d 942, 224 N.Y.S.2d 21, 179 N.E.2d 862 (1961).

Second, if the referee were in fact a "court" then in cases such as Levin's and Mildner's where the Appellate Division "reverses" its referee and makes a new "finding of fact," the aggrieved attorney would have an automatic right of appeal on all questions of law and fact to the Court of Appeals. N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5601(a)(ii); 5501(b). But attorneys in this position do not have this right precisely because the referee is not a "court" under the statute. It would be otherwise if the referee in an attorney disciplinary proceeding were designated to hear and *determine*. N.Y.C.P.L.R. 4001 and 4301.

Third, if the Appellate Division were hearing an appeal, it would have to "state the grounds of its decision." N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5522. As already noted, this requirement is not applicable to decisions on disbarment precisely because the proceedings in the Appellate Division are not appeals.

Finally, the State has conceded—nay, urged—that the referee in an attorney disciplinary proceeding is not a court and, further, that the proceedings in the Appellate Division are not an appeal or review. (Defendant's Brief 3 n. and 23):

"Referee Silberman [the referee in Levin's case] was only that—appointed by the Appellate Division, as an



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arm of that court, to hear and report his recommendations. \* \* \* Obviously the implication is that Referee Silberman decided the proceeding, which he did not and could not. Another implication is that the motion to confirm the referee's report was an appeal, which it was not.

. . .

[Although] the referee, Morton B. Silberman happens to be a Justice of the Supreme Court, he was not acting as such when he was designated to serve as referee to 'hear and report' in Levin's (and Gerzof's) disciplinary proceedings. As such, Silberman was acting as an arm of the Appellate Division. He acts pursuant to CPLR 4320."

In attorney disciplinary proceedings due process requires a hearing by and before the tribunal with the power to decide and punish. The Supreme Court has found such a hearing to be an important "trial right" without which such fundamental due process guarantees as confrontation and a fair hearing would be devoid of substance. *Barber v. Page*, 390 U.S. 719, 721, 88 S.Ct. 1318, 1320, 20 L.Ed.2d 255 (1968); *Berger v. California*, 393 U.S. 314, 315, 89 S.Ct. 540, 541, 21 L.Ed.2d 508 (1969); *Williams v. State of Maryland*, 375 F.Supp. 745, 756-57 (D.Md. 1974).

Speaking of a decision on a motion to suppress, the Ninth Circuit noted the dangers in separating the person who sees the witnesses and the one who makes the decisions:

"Requiring the district court to rehear the evidence if it decides not to follow the recommendations of the magistrate insures that any decision on the facts will be the result of first-hand observation of witnesses and evidence. The law has long recognized the value of these more immediate impressions, and gives them a measure of protection from easy modifications made on





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the basis of dry records. \* \* \* A rule of law permitting the district judge to assign evidentiary hearings to a magistrate, and then disregard the recommendation of the magistrate without hearing any testimony or seeing any evidence, would fly in the face of traditional legal respect for findings of fact made on the basis of full participation in the methods recognized as most effective for determining facts. When the vindication of important legal rights necessarily hangs in the balance, the law must require whatever is essential to preserve the integrity of the fact-finding process. The method most widely regarded as effective in that regard is imposition of the requirement that the fact-finder actually observe the evidentiary process so as to properly weigh and appraise testimony. \* \* \* Since the magistrate sees and hears the evidence, the district court is entitled to rely upon his recommendations when making its decision on the motion. If, however, the district court chooses to reject the recommendation of the magistrate, it must itself hear the testimony and see the evidence before deciding the motion. Permitting the district court to simply review dry records or listen to tape recordings of the evidentiary hearing conducted by the magistrate would not satisfy the high standard which must be set for factual determinations which by themselves can decide the outcome of a criminal trial. The defendant is entitled to the assurance that important factual conclusions will be drawn from the testimony and other evidence itself. That assurance is provided if the district court decides the motion in accordance with the recommendations of a judicial officer who observed the evidence. It is certainly provided if the district court sees and hears the evidence itself. But it is just as certainly absent if the district court is allowed to dis-



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regard the recommendation of the magistrate and decide the motion only on the basis of dry records. \* \* \*

*United States v. Bergeru*, 512 F.2d 391, 393-394 (9th Cir. 1975).

In the only case directly in point that we have found, a federal court has ruled that a state court's order of suspension of an attorney should not be recognized by a federal court where the state procedure did not permit an opportunity to be heard before the court and thus was lacking in due process. *In Re Noell*, 93 F.2d 5 (8th Cir. 1937). In this case, following the filing of charges against the attorney, the court appointed a commissioner to hear and report his findings of fact and recommendations. He recommended a two year suspension and transmitted the testimony and briefs to the court. The parties were permitted to make exceptions, but there were no oral or written arguments.

"Without argument, without a hearing, without affording the respondent an opportunity to be heard, that court overruled all exceptions to the commissioner's report and entered the order of suspension. \* \* \*

*Id.* at 6.

The Missouri statute, like Section 90 of the Judiciary Law, provided that the court had the power to disbar or suspend, although it could appoint a commissioner to hear evidence. The suggestion was made there, as it has been made by defendants here, that the requirements of due process were satisfied by the combination of the hearing before the commissioner and the briefs available to the court. This argument was rejected:

"[T]he hearings before the commissioner were not hearings before the court. \* \* \* [I]t is apparent that the court at no time afforded the respondent an oppor-



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tunity to be heard before it upon the merits of the controversy which it alone had power to determine.”

*Id.* at 7. *Cf. In Re Schlesinger*, 404 Pa. 584, 172 A.2d 835, 842 (1961).

Admittedly, the court in *Noell* did not even have the advantage of having written briefs specifically directed toward the ultimate disposition. But this additional factor in the cases before us cannot remedy the lack of due process afforded these attorneys:

“[T]hey were entitled to a trial of the issues and that means nothing less than that the trier of the facts should hear the evidence. This important constitutional right is the essence of our system of justice and its denial is a violation of the guarantee of due process.”

*United States v. Vater*, 259 F.2d 667, 674 (2d Cir. 1958) (Lumbard, J., dissenting). Without hearing arguments of counsel, the Appellate Division, after merely reading a cold record, substituted its own view in Mr. Levin's and Mr. Mildner's cases for that of its referee. Although, in Mr. Gerzof's proceeding, the Appellate Division essentially adopted its referee's report, he, too, was deprived of a meaningful hearing before the trier of fact.

## **C. Appellate Review**

### **1. Due Process Requirement**

This finding, moreover, affects the plaintiff's claim that New York's failure to accord attorneys an appeal as of right from an adverse decision by the trier-of-fact is a denial of due process. While it is generally true that due process does not require a state to provide litigants with appellate review, the same is not true where, as here, the



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state has failed to provide for a full and fair hearing in the court of original jurisdiction. As the Supreme Court stated in *Ohio ex rel. Bryant v. Akron Metropolitan Park District*, 281 U.S. 74, 80, 50 S.Ct. 228, 230, 74 L.Ed. 710 (1930):

“As to the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, it is sufficient to say that as frequently determined by this court, the right of appeal is not essential to due process, provided that due process has already been accorded in the tribunal of first instance.”

See also, e.g., *Lindsey v. Normet*, 405 U.S. 56, 77, 92 S.Ct. 862, 876, 31 L.Ed.2d 36 (1972). “A fair trial in a fair tribunal is a basic requirement of due process,” *In Re Murchison*, 349 U.S. 133, 136, 75 S.Ct. 623, 625, 99 L.Ed. 942 (1955), and if it is not afforded at the trial level, corrective action by way of appeal must be possible.

#### 2. Failure to Give Due Process at Trial or Appellate Level

The Appellate Division does not afford a party one fair hearing; it may impose discipline without ever hearing testimony or arguments of counsel, and without ever observing the witnesses or parties. In such cases the Fourteenth Amendment would at least require the state to give the attorney the process due him through appellate review. The New York attorney disciplinary statute does not provide review for all attorneys aggrieved by the Appellate Division's decision.

The statute has another defect. It permits the Appellate Division to reverse its referee's report and severely punish an attorney without stating the evidence it relies on or the reasons for its decision. This strikes at the very heart of due process. It not only may promote arbitrariness by the decision maker; it makes detection of arbitrary conduct more difficult in any review of the decision.





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In Mr. Mildner's case the Appellate Division's opinion made no detailed factual findings, but rather, in conclusory fashion stated: "In our opinion, contrary to the report, all three charges are fully sustained by the proof." *In Re Mildner*, 43 A.D.2d 350, 351, 352 N.Y.S.2d 13, 14 (2d Dept. 1974). Although the Appellate Division affirmed its referee's report in all other respects, in Mr. Levin's case, it also reversed one charge in a summary ruling, thereby discrediting Justice Silberman's conclusion that "[a] thorough analysis of the evidence leads me to the conclusion that the charges against [Levin] are supported by little more than conjecture and surmise." Report and Findings of Justice Morton Silberman, *In Matter of Levin*, at 63 (August 31, 1973). In neither case was any explanation given for the adverse decision or for the severe sanction imposed. Without some explanation for the decision to discipline, attorneys in the future will be unable to know what constitutes professional misconduct. Unless there are ascertainable standards, attorney discipline may be abusive and unjust. *Cf.* Lawyer Discipline Needs Improvement, N.Y. State Bar News 5 (Feb. 1975).

Whether the Appellate Division proceedings are likened to those of a court of first instance stating its decision or to those of a court reviewing an administrative agency or board's determination, or to judicial appellate review, some statement of the basis for its decision must be given. The obligations of an appellate court to articulate its reasoning when reversing a trial court are substantial. Surely, the responsibilities of the Appellate Division, sitting as a court of original determination, are as great. If the court finds it administratively convenient to first refer disciplinary actions to referees for a report, it must still, as the body with the power to decide, state its reasons in reaching its own decision.



*Appendix A***V. Equal Protection**

Plaintiffs also contend that the failure of the New York statutory procedure to provide an appeal as of right from the determination of the Appellate Division denies them the equal protection of the laws in that all other New York litigants have one appeal as of right from the determination of the original fact finder.

**A. -Right to Appeal in New York**

As one of New York's most distinguished judges recently wrote, in this state:

"The notion is firmly rooted that a litigant is entitled to at least one review of a final decision."

Hopkins, *The Role of an Intermediate Appellate Court*, 41 Brooklyn L. Rev. 459, 463 (1975).

Civil litigants, following a decision from the court of original jurisdiction, such as the Supreme Court, the County Court or the Family Court, may appeal to the Appellate Division where questions of law and fact are reviewed. *See* Appendix B, *infra*. Criminal defendants also have at least one appeal as of right, with a similar scope of review. *Ibid*.

Moreover, when other professionals, such as physicians, chiropractors, pharmacists, and engineers are disciplined, the Appellate Division hears appeals from the decision of the Board of Regents. *Ibid*. It may review all questions of law and the facts according to the "substantial evidence" standard. *See, e.g., Corwin v. Nyquist*, 37 A.D.2d 656, 322 N.Y.S.2d 405 (3d Dept. 1971); *Miller v. Board of Regents of University of State of N.Y.*, 30 A.D. 2d 994, 294 N.Y.S.2d 29 (3d Dept. 1968).

Attorneys, on the contrary, have no parallel rights. Pursuant to the New York attorney disciplinary statute,



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aggrieved attorneys are entitled to a review as of right only when the Court of Appeals finds constitutional questions controlling or, apparently, when an Appellate Division Justice dissents. N.Y. Jud. Law §90(8); N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5601. Even if such an appeal is granted, the Court of Appeals' review is severely limited. It may review questions of law, but it will affirm the disciplinary decision if there is "some evidence" to support it, substantial or not. *See Matter of Goodman*, 199 N.Y. 143, 144, 92 N.E. 211 (1910); *See also, Del Bello v. Westchester County Bar Ass'n.*, 19 N.Y.2d 466, 472, 280 N.Y.S.2d 651, 655, 227 N.E. 2d 579 (1967); *Matter of Robinson*, 209 N.Y. 354, 359, 103 N.E. 160 (1913); *Matter of Flannery*, 212 N.Y. 610, 106 N.E. 630 (1914). For an analysis of the pertinent statutes relating to the right to appellate review for all litigants in New York see Appendix B.

Even the English system, upon which our disciplinary system is modeled, provides for an appeal from the findings and order of the Disciplinary Tribunal to a divisional court of the Queen's Bench Division, and from there with leave to the House of Lords. P. A. Leach, *The New Look in Disciplinary Enforcement in England*, 61 A.B.A.J. 212, 213 (1975).

#### B. Nature of Appellate Review

Although a state need not provide a right to appeal, *Griffin v. Illinois*, 351 U.S. 12, 18, 76 S.Ct. 585, 590, 100 L.Ed. 891 (1956), our system of justice relies heavily on appellate review. Once a state provides an appellate process, it may not arbitrarily deny an appeal to a selected class of litigants:

"When an appeal is afforded \* \* \* it cannot be granted to some litigants and capriciously or arbitrarily denied



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to others without violating The Equal Protection Clause."

*Lindsay v. Normet*, 405 U.S. 56, 77, 92 S.Ct. 862, 876, 31 L.Ed.2d 36 (1972). See also, e.g., *National Union of Marine Cooks & Stewards v. Arnold*, 348 U.S. 37, 43, 75 S.Ct. 92, 95, 99 L.Ed. 46 (1954).

Llewellyn has characterized the appellate courts as the "central and vital symbol of The Law." K. Llewellyn, *The Common Law Tradition: Deciding Appeals* 4 (1960). Over 150 years ago, Senator Clinton declared his position in an appeal heard by the New York State Senate:

"In order to guard against the fallibility of the human understanding, and to shield the citizen from the attacks of injustice, it may be regarded as a cardinal principle in our land, that no single tribunal is intrusted with the sole determination of a man's property."

*Yates v. People*, 6 Johns. 337, 455 (1810).

The New York Court of Appeals, quoting *Yates* stated that

"our law considers it an essential right of a suitor to have his cause examined in tribunals superior to those in which he considers himself aggrieved."

*Matter of Luckenbach*, 303 N.Y. 491, 496, 104 N.E.2d 870 (1952). See also, *Handy v. Butler*, 183 A. D. 359, 169 N.Y.S. 770 (2d Dept. 1918). And the court in *People v. Becker*, 239 P.2d 898, 901, 108 Cal. App.2d 764 (1952) observed that

"[t]he right of every man to his day in court is not limited to the trial court but embraces as well his day in the appropriate reviewing court."

All the states have recognized the importance of appellate review to a correct adjudication in criminal matters





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by providing some method of appeal from a criminal conviction. *Griffin v. Illinois*, 351 U.S. 12, 18, 76 S.Ct. 585, 590, 100 L.Ed. 891 (1956). Statistics show that a substantial proportion of criminal convictions are reversed by state appellate courts. *Id.*

An analysis of the functions of appellate courts reveals their significant role. As Professor Kurland puts it:

"Any appellate court has at least three distinct functions to perform. The first is that of correcting erroneous decisions rendered by judicial tribunals inferior to it in the judicial hierarch. The second is to maintain a consistency among the decisions of these lower courts subordinate to it, so that the law is even-handedly applied within the system. The third is the lawmaking function of creating and amending rules of law, not only so that they may be followed by lower courts within the system, but also to provide guidance to lawyers and their clients as to the propriety of their behavior, their obligations, their duties, their rights, and their remedies."

Kurland, Jurisdiction of the United States Supreme Court: Time for a Change? 59 Cornell L. Rev. 616, 618 (1974). Of particular interest in this case is this last function—to speak directly to the litigants about their claims. Since no appeal was granted, this appellate obligation was never met. Moreover, the Appellate Division, the trier of fact, never apprised the losing parties as to why the referees' reports had been affirmed or reversed, or in what way their behavior had been improper. The law must not only do justice, but it must show that it does justice. Lasky, Observing Appellate Opinions From Below the Bench, 49 Calif. L. Rev. 831, 835 (1961).



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### **C. Unconstitutionality of Classification of Attorneys as Not Entitled to Appeals**

Separate treatment of attorneys in providing a right to appellate review is unconstitutional only if, according to the traditional formulation, the classification does not bear a rational relationship to a legitimate governmental objective. *Lindsley v. Natural Carbonic Gas Co.*, 220 U.S. 61, 78, 31 S.Ct. 337, 340, 55 L.Ed. 369 (1911).

“[T]he classification must be reasonable, not arbitrary, and must rest upon some ground of difference having a fair and substantial relation to the object of the legislation, so that all persons similarly circumstanced shall be treated alike.”

*F. S. Royster Guano Co. v. Virginia*, 253 U.S. 412, 415, 40 S.Ct. 560, 561-62, 64 L.Ed. 989 (1920).

Where appropriate, a legislature may regulate different professions in different ways. Thus in ruling that an act regulating dental advertising was not unconstitutionally discriminatory the Supreme Court stated:

“Nor has plaintiff any ground for objection because the particular regulation is limited to dentists and is not extended to other professional classes. The state was not bound to deal alike with all these classes, or to strike at all evils at the same time or in the same way. It could deal with the different professions according to the needs of the public in relation to each.”

*Semler v. Oregon State Board of Dental Examiners*, 294 U.S. 608, 610, 55 S.Ct. 570, 571, 79 L.Ed. 1086 (1935).

The state presents three purposes which it believes justify its distinctive treatment of disciplined attorneys. First, it argues that attorneys are simply not fungible with other professionals. The state, therefore, may provide different disciplinary machinery for other professions, in-



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cluding the right of appeal, but such reviewing methods are neither appropriate nor necessary in the disciplinary proceedings of lawyers.

The state seeks to analogize its reasoning with respect to attorney discipline procedures to that upheld by the Second Circuit with respect to the procedures for revocation of a teaching certificate. *Pordum v. Board of Regents of State of New York*, 491 F.2d 1281 (2d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 419 U.S. 843, 95 S.Ct. 74, 42 L.Ed.2d 71 (1974). In that case Pordum argued that he could not be removed from the classroom during the three to four week period preceding a hearing concerning his fitness to teach. In upholding the statutory procedure the court recognized that

“[t]he teaching profession differs from these other professions in many respects, including the special vulnerability of the client population, the high duty of care owed by the state to that group and the unique responsibility which the state has to provide an effective system of education. These distinctions justify the legislative determination that different treatment with respect to the disciplining of the different professionals is required.”

*Id.* at 1286.

The state here, however, fails to present distinctions which justify the legislative choice to deny attorneys an appeal as of right. It is true that the state has a high duty “to preserve public confidence in the judicial institution and to protect the courts and public from misconduct.” Note, *The Imposition of Disciplinary Measures for the Misconduct of Attorneys*, 52 Col. L. Rev. 1039 (1952). But it owes a similar duty to protect the public from other unfit professionals—doctors, pharmacists, and architects—who can also cause great injury. In *Pordum* the court was concerned with the necessity of an immediate, as opposed to a slightly delayed, hearing. In this case, we are concerned



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with the procedural safeguard of an appeal from a final decision imposing a grievous sanction. The state gives no reasons for denying this important right to attorneys while affording it to all other litigants, including all other professionals.

The state's reliance on the separate procedures for the disciplining of judges is misplaced. The problem of disciplining judges is not the same as that of disciplining lawyers. Even should a trial judge be removed following discipline he still may continue to practice his profession. Compare *Friedman v. State of New York*, 24 N.Y.2d 528 (1969), with Vol. III, Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory 1132 (1975). Cf. amendment to N. Y. Const., Art. 6, §22(j) submitted to the people for approval, November 4, 1975. By contrast, when a lawyer loses his license to practice he loses his ability to earn a living in the way that he is trained to do.

Second, the state contends that since the initial decision against other professions, unlike attorneys, is rendered by an administrative body, they are more in need of judicial review. This is accomplished by Article 78 proceeding, in which the review afforded by the Appellate Division is akin to ordinary judicial appellate review. See Cohen & Karger, *Powers of the New York Court of Appeals*, §51 at 233 (rev. ed. 1951). This conclusion is unjustified; the state presents no evidence that initial determinations in non-attorney cases, rendered after a full due process hearing, are more prone to error than initial judicial decisions in attorney cases. The state chose to place attorney discipline in judicial hands in the first instance. It cannot use this decision to rationalize depriving attorneys of the same rights of review it grants to all other professionals. The special relationship between courts and counsel may justify entrusting attorney discipline to the judiciary, but it does not justify giving attorneys fewer rights than their peers in other professions.





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The state's final argument is that the statutory procedure affords the necessary swift discipline. "The establishment of prompt efficacious procedures to achieve legitimate state ends is a proper state interest worthy of cognizance in constitutional adjudication." *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645, 656, 92 S.Ct. 1208, 1215, 31 L.Ed.2d 551 (1972). But all professionals and other citizens who deviate from prescribed standards of conduct must be disciplined swiftly and effectively to protect the public from fraud and other harm. Yet the state fails to give any reason why only allegedly deviant attorneys must be denied the right of appellate review.

Since the state subjects attorneys to the judicial process, equal protection requires it to give those attorneys the same appellate rights as it gives to all others subject to the judicial process unless it can defend its decision by a "legitimately defensible difference." Ely, *Legislative and Administrative Motivation in Constitutional Law*, 79 Yale L. J. 1205, 1223 (1970). The denial of appellate review is a substantial deprivation, the state's burden is great; it cannot cavalierly "bolt the door to equal justice." *Griffin v. Illinois*, 351 U.S. 12, 24, 76 S.Ct. 585, 593, 100 L.Ed. 891 (1956) (Frankfurter, J., concurring). All people charged with misconduct must, so far as the law is concerned, "stand on an equality before the bar of justice in every American court." *Chambers v. State of Florida*, 309 U.S. 227, 241, 60 S.Ct. 472, 479, 84 L.Ed. 716 (1940).

## **VI. Alternatives to Denial of Due Process and Equal Protection**

It is appropriate to consider alternatives to the state's present procedure which might give additional protection to the lawyer without adding to the burdens of the state courts. If the state can, without undue inconvenience, meet



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its substantive goals, the excuse for constitutionally suspect procedures becomes impossible to justify.

We do recognize that the New York Court of Appeals, as the highest appellate court in this state, is, not unlike the Supreme Court of the United States, heavily burdened with appeals. *See* Hopkins, Small Sparks from a Low Fire: Some Reflections on the Appellate Process, 38 Bklyn L. Rev. 551 (1972). Thus, a requirement by this court, implied or explicit, that a full appeal to the Court of Appeals be required would certainly be uncalled for and quite burdensome to the state judicial system.

On the other hand, it would be simple to amend the statute by designating as statutory trier of fact the Supreme Court Justice who now acts only as a referee. Provision for a referee "to *determine*," as opposed to a referee simply "to *report*," already exists in New York law. N.Y.C.P.L.R. 4001, 4301, 4320. The decision of such a referee stands "as the decision of a court," N.Y.C.P.L.R. 4319, and is reviewable on appeal as all other court decisions in New York. *See* N.Y.C.P.L.R. 5016(c). Or, the New York Supreme Court at nisi prius, as opposed to the Appellate Division, could be made the tribunal of original jurisdiction—as it already is in most other judicial proceedings.

In either event, an appeal could be taken from the decision of the Supreme Court Justice to the Appellate Division which would then sit in its usual capacity as a court of review, with the normal deference to the trial judge. There would be the same effective kind of protection as is now available to all other professionals in the state without adding to the burden of the state system. The trial judge would, under the New York Civil Practice Law and Rules, be required to set forth his reasons for decision and in accordance with the normal practice the appellate court would hear oral argument and prepare an appellate decision.



*Appendix A***VII. Retroactivity**

This new procedure need not necessarily upset any disciplinary or disbarment decisions other than those presently before us. The question of retroactivity may be examined under the criteria used for newly recognized constitutional rules of criminal procedure. *Cf.* Note, Retroactivity in Civil Suits: *Linkletter* Modified, 42 Ford. L. Rev. 653 (1974). Under this test there are three primary considerations: (1) the purpose to be served by the new standard, (2) the extent of the reliance by courts and law enforcement authorities on the old rule and (3) the effect of retroactive application on the administration of justice. *See, e.g., Stovall v. Denno*, 388 U.S. 293, 297, 87 S.Ct. 1967, 1970, 18 L.Ed.2d 1199 (1967); *Linkletter v. Walker*, 381 U.S. 618, 85 S.Ct. 1731, 14 L.Ed.2d 601 (1965); *Blackburn v. Cross*, 510 F.2d 1014 (2d Cir. 1975); *United States v. Liquori*, 438 F.2d 663, 668-76 (2d Cir. 1971). None of these criteria require retroactivity here. Nor, in view of the assumption of judicial regularity in decisions of the Appellate Division need we find that current practice "raises serious questions about the accuracy of guilty verdicts in past trials." *Williams v. United States*, 401 U.S. 646, 653, 91 S.Ct. 1148, 1152, 28 L.Ed.2d 388 (1971). *See also, e.g., Adams v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 278, 278-83, 92 S.Ct. 916, 918-919, 31 L.Ed.2d 202 (1972). State judges and attorneys have relied upon the present procedure for a long period and retrospective application would, it could be found, be seriously burdensome and disruptive.

These changes would vindicate the rights of New York attorneys to due process without requiring a major upheaval in the state's method of disciplining them. They would call only for the introduction of procedural safeguards which are already required and in existence in New York for everyone but attorneys. They would not lower



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the standard of conduct to which attorneys are held. It is in no way inconsistent with other proposals to improve disciplinary procedures in New York. *See* 18th Annual Report, Jud. Conf. of N.Y., Leg. Doc. No. 90, "Disciplinary Enforcement Against Attorneys in New York: An Evaluation and Recommendations," 234 ff. (1973).

**VIII. Conclusion**

The New York statutory disciplinary procedure denies accused attorneys due process of law. It permits the court of original jurisdiction to rule without holding a full and fair hearing or stating the reasons for its decision and then fails to provide for an appeal as of right from this determination. When a court has the awesome power of determining the validity of charges affecting an attorney's reputation and livelihood, it must scrupulously adhere to procedural due process. There is a pressing need to protect the public from unethical attorneys, but a state may not in its zeal to discipline them ignore the requirements of the United States Constitution. The law also is unconstitutional in denying attorneys the equal protection of an appeal permitted all other professionals. Section 90 of the Judiciary Law, as interpreted by the New York courts should be declared unconstitutional.

October 9, 1975

JACK B. WEINSTEIN





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**Appendix A to Dissenting Memorandum**

**The New York Attorney-Disciplinary Statute:  
New York Judiciary Law §90,  
Subdivisions 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9**

*“§90. Admission to and removal from practice by  
appellate division; character committees*

• • •

“2. The supreme court shall have power and control over attorneys and counsellors-at-law and all persons practicing or assuming to practice law, and the appellate division of the supreme court in each department is authorized to censure, suspend from practice or remove from office any attorney and counsellor-at-law admitted to practice who is guilty of professional misconduct, malpractice, fraud, deceit, crime or misdemeanor, or any conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and the appellate division of the supreme court is hereby authorized to revoke such admission for any misrepresentation or suppression of any information in connection with the application for admission to practice.

“It shall be the duty of the appellate division to insert in each order of suspension or removal hereafter rendered a provision which shall command the attorney and counsellor-at-law thereafter to desist and refrain from the practice of law in any form, either as principal or as agent, clerk or employee of another. In addition it shall forbid the performance of any of the following acts, to wit:

“a. The appearance, as an attorney or counsellor-at-law before any court, judge, justice, board, commission or other public authority.

“b. The giving to another of an opinion as to the law or its application, or of any advice in relation thereto.



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"In case of suspension only, the order may limit the command to the period of time within which such suspension shall continue, and if justice so requires may further limit the scope thereof.

"If an attorney and counsellor-at-law has been heretofore removed from office, and the appellate division shall upon application of any attorney and counsellor-at-law, or of any incorporated bar association, and upon such notice to the respondent as may be required, amend the order of removal by adding thereto as a part thereof, provisions similar to those required to be inserted in orders thereafter made.

"If a certified copy of such order or of such amended order, be served upon the attorney and counsellor-at-law suspended or removed from office, a violation thereof may be punished as a contempt of court.

"3. The suspension or removal of an attorney or counsellor-at-law, by the appellate division of the supreme court, operates as a suspension or removal in every court of the state.

. . .

"6. Before an attorney or counsellor-at-law is suspended or removed as prescribed in this section, a copy of the charges against him must be delivered to him personally within or without the state or, in case it is established to the satisfaction of the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to which the charges have been presented, that he cannot with due diligence be served personally, the same may be served upon him by mail, publication or otherwise as the said presiding justice may direct, and he must be allowed an opportunity of being heard in his defense. In all cases where the charges are served in any manner other than personally, and the attorney and counsellor-at-law so served does not appear,



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an application may be made by such attorney or in his behalf to the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to whom the charges were presented at any time within one year after the rendition of the judgment, or final order of suspension or removal, and upon good cause shown and upon such terms as may be deemed just by such presiding justice, such attorney and counsellor-at-law must be allowed to defend himself against such charges.

“The justices of the appellate division in any judicial department, or a majority of them, may make an order directing the expenses of any disciplinary proceedings, and the necessary costs and disbursements of the petitioner in prosecuting such charges, including the expense of any preliminary investigation in relation to professional conduct of an attorney and counsellor-at-law, to be paid by the county treasurer of a county within the judicial department, which expenses shall be a charge upon such county.

“7. In addition to the duties prescribed by section seven hundred of the county law, it shall be the duty of any district attorney within a department, when so designated by the justices of the appellate division of the supreme court in such department, or a majority of them, to prosecute all proceedings for the removal or suspension of attorneys and counsellors-at-law or the said justices, or a majority of them may appoint any attorney and counsellor-at-law to conduct a preliminary investigation and to prosecute any disciplinary proceedings and, during or upon the termination of the investigation of proceedings, may fix the compensation to be paid to such attorney and counsellor-at-law for the services rendered which compensation shall be a charge against the county specified in his certificate and shall be paid thereon.

“8. Any petitioner or respondent in a disciplinary proceeding against an attorney or counsellor-at-law under



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this section, including a bar association or any other corporation or association, shall have the right to appeal to the court of appeals from a final order of any appellate division in such proceedings upon questions of law involved therein, subject to the limitations prescribed by . . . the constitution of this state.

"9. No objection shall be taken to the appointment of any member of the bar to act as referee or judge in a disciplinary proceeding under this section on the ground that he is a member of a bar association or other corporation or association which is the petitioner therein."



## Appendix 3

## Appendix 3 to the main document

This section contains a list of names of persons who have been mentioned in the text of the document. The names are listed in alphabetical order of the first letter of the name. The names are listed in the following order: first name, last name, and then the name of the institution or organization to which the person belongs. The names are listed in the following order: first name, last name, and then the name of the institution or organization to which the person belongs.

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**Appendix B to Dissenting Memorandum  
The Right to Appellate Review in New York**

**A. Professionals**

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Statutory Trier-of-Fact</i>	<i>Court of Appellate Review as of Right</i>	<i>Scope of Appellate Review as of Right</i>
1—Attorneys	Appellate Division (Judiciary Law §90)	Court of Appeals (Judiciary Law §90(8))	None as to facts; none as to law except when a Constitutional issue is the only ques- tion or apparently when a Justice of the Appellate Division dissents
2—Physicians, Chiropractors, Engineers, Accountants, Nurses, and all others covered by Education Law §6500-8208	Board of Regents (Education Law §6510(3))	Appellate Division, Third De- partment (Education Law §6510(4))	All questions of law and "substantial evi- dence" test as to facts

**B. Civil Litigants**

<i>Statutory Trier-of-Fact</i>	<i>Court of Appellate Review as of Right</i>	<i>Scope of Appellate Review as of Right</i>
1—Supreme Court	Appellate Division (CPLR 5701(a))	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(c))
2—County Court	Appellate Division (CPLR 5701(a))	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(c))
3—Family Court	Appellate Division (Family Court Act §1111)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(c))
4—Surrogate's Court	Appellate Division (Surrogate's Court Act §2701)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(c))



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<i>Statutory Trier-of-Fact</i>	<i>Court of Appellate Review as of Right</i>	<i>Scope of Appellate Review as of Right</i>
5—Court of Claims	Appellate Division, Third or Fourth Department (Court of Claims Act §24)	Questions of law and questions of fact (Court of Claims Act §24)
6—District Court	Appellate Term or County Court (Uniform District Court Act §1701)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(d))
7—Civil Court, City of New York	Appellate Division or Appellate Term (N.Y.C. Civil Court Act §1701)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(d))
8—Other City Courts	Appellate Term or County Court (Uniform City Court Act §1701)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(d))
9—Justice Court	Appellate Term or County Court (Uniform Justice Court Act §1701)	Questions of law and questions of fact (CPLR 5501(d))



*Appendix A**Appendix B to Dissenting Memorandum***C. Criminal Defendants**

<i>Statutory Trier-of-Fact</i>	<i>Court of Appellate Review as of Right</i>	<i>Scope of Appellate Review as of Right</i>
1—Supreme Court	Appellate Division (CPL §450.60(1))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))
2—County Court	Appellate Division or Appellate Term (CPL §450.60(2))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))
3—District Court	County Court or Appellate Term (CPL §450.60(3))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))
4—Criminal Court, City of New York	Appellate Division or Appellate Term (CPL §450.60(4))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))
5—Other City Courts	County Court or Appellate Term (CPL §450.60(3))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))
6—Justice Court	County Court or Appellate Term (CPL §450.60(3))	Questions of law and issues of fact (CPL §470.15(1))



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Appendix B  
Opinion and Order Convening  
Three Judge Court

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

HERBERT MILDNER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

74 C 1101

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually  
and as Presiding Justice, Appel-  
late Division of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Depart-  
ment, et al.,

Defendants.

-----x

Appearances:

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BY: RICHARD A. LIPPE, ESQ.  
JOHN M. ARMENTANO, ESQ.  
Of Counsel



1974  
Appendix B  
Opinion and Order Concerning  
Three Judges Court

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

REBERT M. HARRIS.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

-v-

FRANK A. GONZALEZ, JR.,  
and an individual known as "Frank"  
JACKSON, of the State of  
New York, known as "Frank"  
JACKSON, et al.

Defendants.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

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Presented by the People of the State of New York.

Presented by the People of the State of New York.

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Appearances (continued)

HON. LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ

Attorney General of the State of  
New York

Attorney for Defendants

Two World Trade Center

New York, New York 10047

By: DANIEL M. COHEN, Esq.  
Assistant Attorney General  
Of Counsel

WEINSTEIN, D. J.

This civil rights action raises the issue of whether the public's interest in an ethical bar and an attorney's interest in not being denied the right to practice law have been balanced by the State of New York on a scale meeting the tests of the United States Constitution. 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Plaintiff, Herbert Mildner, complains that the New York State procedure for disciplining attorneys, and particularly the appeals prac-



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tice, is constitutionally infirm in that it denies him due process and equal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. New York Judiciary Law § 90; New York Constitution, Article 6, § 3 and CPLR 5501 et seq. and 5601 et seq. Since the plaintiff seeks interlocutory and permanent injunctive relief and has raised a substantial constitutional issue a three judge court is required. 28 U.S.C. §2281.

I.

Mr. Mildner had been practicing for some thirteen years when Roberta Evans, his long time friend, alleged that he had wrongfully converted her funds for his personal use. The Judicial Inquiry on Professional Conduct, a body created by

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the Appellate Division of the Second Department, conducted an investigation. Disciplinary proceedings were then commenced on October 4, 1972, by the Appellate Division which appointed Justice Albert McGrover, of the Supreme Court, as a referee to hear and report.

After extensive hearings, resulting in a record of more than 850 pages, Justice McGrover prepared a detailed report concluding that the charges set forth in the disciplinary proceeding petition had not been sustained. On the basis of the record alone, the Appellate Division rejected the referee's report without stating any reasons for its disaffirmation. In a per curiam opinion it wrote in part: "In our opinion, contrary to the report,



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[the] . . . charges are fully sustained by the proof." In *Re Mildner*, 43 App. Div. 2d 350, 351, 352 N.Y.S. 2d 13, 14 (1974). "[C]onsidering the respondent's lack of candor and contrition," id., the court suspended plaintiff from the practice of law for three years.

Having obtained a stay of the order of suspension, Mr. Mildner applied to the Appellate Division for reargument or for permission to appeal to the New York Court of Appeals. That motion was denied without opinion.

The plaintiff then sought leave to appeal from the New York Court of Appeals. The application for leave to appeal was based upon three grounds: (1) that the plaintiff had been deprived of due pro-





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cess in that the order of suspension had been based on the recanted testimony of an admitted perjured witness; (2) that the Appellate Division had erred in reversing the findings of its referee; and (3) that as a matter of law the charges against the plaintiff had not been established. This motion was also denied without opinion. In Re Mildner, 34 N.Y. 2d 516 (May 9, 1974).

Subsequently, plaintiff instituted this action to invalidate his suspension. The Appellate Division then stayed the commencement of plaintiff's suspension until November 1, 1974 to permit this Court to consider defendants' motion for summary judgment and plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction and for the



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impaneling of a three judge court.

Mr. Mildner argues that attorneys, unlike any other New York professionals, have no appeal as of right from an original determination disciplining them. Other professionals can appeal from an order of discipline to the Appellate Division as of right. Lawyers, since they are disciplined by the Appellate Division in the first instance, have only a limited right of appeal from that original determination. Section 90 of the New York Judiciary Law deals with appeals in such proceedings, providing in relevant part:

"8. Any petitioner or respondent in a disciplinary proceeding against an attorney or counsellor at law under this section, including a bar association or any



other corporation or association, shall have the right to appeal to the court of appeals from a final order of any appellate division involved therein, subject to the limitations prescribed by article six, section seven, of the constitution of this state."

Apparently, following a suspension order from the Appellate Division, which acts as a court of original jurisdiction, attorneys involved in disciplinary proceedings are afforded an appeal as of right to the New York Court of Appeals only with respect to issues which the Court of Appeals finds directly involve the construction of the state or federal constitutions. See New York Constitution, Article 6, § 3 and CPLR 5501 et seq. and 5601 et seq. Whether the appeal is taken as of right or permission to appeal is granted by the Appellate Division or



the Court of Appeals, it is alleged that only questions of law are reviewed. Id.

Plaintiff contends that he was particularly aggrieved by these procedures since the Appellate Division summarily reversed the finding of its referee who had heard the witnesses and the arguments of counsel. He claims that the lack of review under these circumstances was a denial of due process and equal protection.

## II.

When a state statute of general applicability is attacked as unconstitutional on its face or as applied, a three judge court must be convened to grant injunctive relief unless the claims are "essentially fictitious," Bailey v. Patterson, 369





U.S. 31, 33, 82 S. Ct. 549, 551; 7 L.Ed. 2d 512, 514 (1962); "obviously frivolous," Hannis Distilling Co. v. Baltimore, 216 U.S. 285, 288, 30 S.Ct. 326, 327 (1910); or "obviously without merit," Ex parte Poresky, 290 U.S. 30, 32, 54 S.Ct. 3, 4 (1933).

It cannot be said that any prior decisions of the Supreme Court absolutely "foreclose the subject and leave no room for the inference that the questions raised can be the subject of controversy." Goosby v. Osser, 309 U.S. 512, 518, 93 S.Ct. 854, 859, 35 L.Ed. 2d 36, 42 (1973). The complaint that the New York statutory procedure for disciplining attorneys is unconstitutional as applied to him, is not "devoid of merit." Hannis Distilling



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Co. v. Baltimore, supra, 216 U.S. at 288,  
30 S.Ct. at 327.

As the Second Circuit recently noted:

"[w]ithout passing on the constitutional claims, we agree they are sufficiently substantial under the liberal test the Supreme Court has recently announced in Goosby v. Osser, 409 U.S. 512, 93 S.Ct. 854, 35 L. Ed.2d 36 (1973)."  
Taylor v. Lavine, 497 F.2d 1208, 1214 (2d Cir. 1974).

Recently, in a thoughtful opinion, Judge MacMahon ruled that although the New York provisions regarding attorney disciplinary proceedings did not provide for appellate review as of right, they were not unconstitutional on their face.

Javits. v. Stevens, slip op. 41212

(S.D.N.Y. Sept. 24, 1974). The situation in Javits was rather different from the one before this Court. First, the case



was not in the same procedural posture. Judge MacMahon did not pass on the substantiality of the constitutional claims in the context of a determination to convene a three-judge court. Here, we need not weigh plaintiff's claims with the same scale which we would use were we deciding directly upon the merits. It is sufficient, for our purposes, if they meet the test enunciated in Goosby v. Osser, 409 U.S. 512, 93 S.Ct. 854, 35 L.Ed.2d 36 (1973).

Furthermore, plaintiff contends that he was particularly aggrieved by the denial of a right to appeal because the Appellate Division reversed the findings of their appointed referee in a summary decision without stating any reasons for



their disaffirmation. In Javits, the Appellate Division confirmed their referee's report.

Thus, Mr. Mildner argues, the state disciplinary proceedings are unconstitutional as applied to him. Three-judge courts have been ordered impaneled by the Supreme Court in situations where the plaintiff claimed that the state statute was unconstitutional as applied. See, e.g., Dept. of Employment v. United States, 385 U.S. 355, 87 S.Ct. 464, 17 L.Ed.2d 414 (1966); Idlewild Bon Voyage Liquor Corp. v. Epstein, 370 U.S. 713, 82 S.Ct. 1294, 8 L.Ed.2d 794 (1962); Query v. United States, 316 U.S. 486, 62 S.Ct. 1122, 86 L.Ed. 1616 (1942).



their classification. In Javier, the  
Appellate Division confirmed their re-  
lease report.

Thus, Mr. Milner argues, law abiding  
disciplinarily promulgated and unobscured  
should be applied to him. These-  
court have been ordered applied by  
the Supreme Court in situations where the  
plaintiff claimed that the state statute  
was unconstitutional as applied. See

3-7, Corp. of Employees v. United  
States, 385 U.S. 330, 87 S.Ct. 461, 17  
1-10 in 419 (1964); Illinois for wages  
United States v. Westlake, 370 U.S. 311  
37 S.Ct. 1294, 3 L.Ed. 2d 1294 (1962).  
United States v. United States, 370 U.S. 421  
37 S.Ct. 1294, 3 L.Ed. 2d 1294 (1962).

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Conclusion

This case must be "heard and determined by a district court of three judges . . ." 28 U.S.C. & 2281. Of course, this does not mean that plaintiff is entitled to the relief sought. We intimate no opinion on the merits.

The suspension order of the Appellate Division must be stayed until the three judge court determines the validity of plaintiff's claims. When the court is appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit, the defendants may apply to vacate this stay.

So ordered.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York  
October 23, 1974

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Jack B. Weinstein,  
U.S.D.J.



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Order of Consolidation

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

HERBERT MILDNER

V.

74 C 1101

FRANK A. GULOTTA, PRESIDING  
JUSTICE, et al.,

MILTON LEVIN

V.

74 C 1668

FRANK A. GULOTTA, PRESIDING  
JUSTICE, et al.,

JULIUS GERZOF

V.

74 C 1684

FRANK A. GULOTTA, PRESIDING  
JUSTICE, et al.,

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These cases will be heard by a  
three-judge panel on March 4, 1975 at  
2:00 PM, in courtroom number 10 on the  
6th floor of the United States Courthouse  
for the Eastern District of New York,



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225 Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, New York.

All counsel and parties shall be prepared for a hearing at that time.

The briefing schedule is set as follows: Plaintiffs' briefs shall be submitted by February 10, 1975, Defendants' briefs shall be submitted by February 21, 1975, and Plaintiffs' reply briefs shall be submitted by February 27, 1975. One copy of every brief shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court for the Eastern District, and copies of every brief shall be sent to the chambers of Judges Moore, Neaher, and Weinstein.

The Clerk of the Court shall send copies of this order to each of the parties and to each of the attorneys and



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to Judge Moore and Judge Neaher.

So Ordered.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York  
January 17, 1975

/s/  
Jack B. Weinstein,  
U.S.D.J.





State Statute ChallengedSection 90 of the New  
York Judiciary Law**§ 90. Admission to and removal from practice by appellate division; character committees**

1. a. Upon the state board of law examiners certifying that a person has passed the required examination, or that the examination has been dispensed with, the appellate division of the supreme court in the department to which such person shall have been certified by the state board of law examiners, if it shall be satisfied that such person possesses the character and general fitness requisite for an attorney and counsellor-at-law, shall admit him to practice as such attorney and counsellor-at-law in all the courts of this state, provided that he has in all respects complied with the rules of the court of appeals and the rules of the appellate divisions relating to the admission of attorneys.

b. Upon the application, pursuant to the rules of the court of appeals, of any person who has been admitted to practice law in another state or territory or the District of Columbia of the United States, or in a foreign country, to be admitted to practice as an attorney and counsellor-at-law in the courts of this state without taking the regular bar examination, the appellate division of the supreme court in the department in which such person is an actual resident at the time of such application, if it shall be satisfied that such person possesses the character and general fitness requisite for an attorney and counsellor-at-law, shall admit him to practice as such attorney and counsellor-at-law, in all the courts of this state, provided, that he has in all respects complied with the rules of the court of appeals and the rules of the appellate divisions relating to the admission of attorneys.



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c. The members of the committee appointed by the appellate division in each department to investigate the character and fitness of applicants for admission to the bar, shall be entitled to their necessary traveling, hotel and other expenses, incurred in the performance of their duties, payable by the state out of moneys appropriated therefor, upon certificate of the presiding justice of the appellate division by which such committee is appointed.

d. The committee on character and fitness appointed by the appellate division of the supreme court in the first judicial department and the committee on character and fitness appointed by the appellate division of the supreme court of the second judicial department, may each, with the written consent of the justices of each of such appellate divisions or a majority of such justices, acting for their respective appellate divisions, from time to time, appoint and remove a secretary, stenographers and assistants, and procure a suitable office for each committee, properly furnished and equipped and all books, stationery, blanks, postal cards, expressage and postage stamps as shall be required for the proper performance of the duties of each such committee.

e. The salaries of such secretary, stenographers and assistants shall be fixed for each department by the justices of the appellate division in each department or a majority of them in each department.

f. The salaries of such secretary, stenographers and assistants and the necessary expenses under the terms of this act in the first judicial department, shall, in the said first judicial department, be paid by the comptroller of the city of New York.

g. The salaries of such secretary, stenographers and assistants and the necessary expenses under the terms of this act in the second judicial department shall be certified by the presiding justice of such department to the state comptroller who shall audit the same. The state department of taxation and finance shall pay such salaries and expenses and shall apportion the same among the counties comprising the second judicial department. Such counties shall reimburse the state for such compensation. The time and method of such apportionment and the



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time and method of such reimbursement shall be as specified in section seventy-four of this chapter.

2. The supreme court shall have power and control over attorneys and counsellors-at-law and all persons practicing or assuming to practice law, and the appellate division of the supreme court in each department is authorized to censure, suspend from practice or remove from office any attorney and counsellor-at-law admitted to practice who is guilty of professional misconduct, malpractice, fraud, deceit, crime or misdemeanor, or any conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and the appellate division of the supreme court is hereby authorized to revoke such admission for any misrepresentation or suppression of any information in connection with the application for admission to practice.

It shall be the duty of the appellate division to insert in each order of suspension or removal hereafter rendered a provision which shall command the attorney and counsellor-at-law thereafter to desist and refrain from the practice of law in any form, either as principal or as agent, clerk or employee of another. In addition it shall forbid the performance of any of the following acts, to wit:

a. The appearance as an attorney or counsellor-at-law before any court, judge, justice, board, commission or other public authority.

b. The giving to another of an opinion as to the law or its application, or of any advice in relation thereto.

In case of suspension only, the order may limit the command to the period of time within which such suspension shall continue, and if justice so requires may further limit the scope thereof.

If an attorney and counsellor-at-law has been heretofore removed from office, the appellate division shall upon application of any attorney and counsellor-at-law, or of any incorporated bar association, and upon such notice to the respondent as may be required, amend the order of removal by adding thereto as a part thereof, provisions similar to those required to be inserted in orders hereafter made.

If a certified copy of such order or of such amended order, be served upon the attorney and counsellor-at-law suspended or removed from office, a violation thereof may be punished as a contempt of court.





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3. The suspension or removal of an attorney or counsellor-at-law, by the appellate division of the supreme court, operates as a suspension or removal in every court of the state.

4. Any person being an attorney and counsellor-at-law, who shall be convicted of a felony, shall, upon such conviction, cease to be an attorney and counsellor-at-law, or to be competent to practice law as such.

Whenever any attorney and counsellor-at-law shall be convicted of a felony, there may be presented to the appellate division of the supreme court a certified or exemplified copy of the judgment of such conviction, and thereupon the name of the person so convicted shall, by order of the court, be struck from the roll of attorneys.

5. Upon a reversal of the conviction for felony of an attorney and counsellor-at-law, or pardon by the president of the United States or governor of this or another state of the United States, the appellate division shall have power to vacate or modify such order or debarment. However, if such attorney or counsellor-at-law has been removed from practice in another jurisdiction, a pardon in said jurisdiction shall not be a basis for application for re-admission in this jurisdiction unless he shall have been re-admitted in the jurisdiction where pardoned.

6. Before an attorney or counsellor-at-law is suspended or removed as prescribed in this section, a copy of the charges against him must be delivered to him personally within or without the state or, in case it is established to the satisfaction of the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to which the charges have been presented, that he cannot with due diligence be served personally, the same may be served upon him by mail, publication or otherwise as the said presiding justice may direct, and he must be allowed an opportunity of being heard in his defense. In all cases where the charges are served in any manner other than personally, and the attorney and counsellor-at-law so served does not appear, an application may be made by such attorney or in his behalf to the presiding justice of the appellate division of the supreme court to whom the charges were presented at any time within one year after the rendition of the judgment, or final order of suspension or removal, and upon good cause shown and upon such terms as may be deemed just by such presiding justice, such attorney and counsellor-at-law must be allowed to defend himself against such charges.





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The justices of the appellate division in any judicial department, or a majority of them, may make an order directing the expenses of any disciplinary proceedings, and the necessary costs and disbursements of the petitioner in prosecuting such charges, including the expense of ~~any~~ preliminary investigation in relation to professional conduct of an attorney and counsellor-at-law, to be paid by the county treasurer of a county within the judicial department, which expenses shall be a charge upon such county.

7. In addition to the duties prescribed by section seven hundred of the county law, it shall be the duty of any district attorney within a department, when so designated by the justices of the appellate division of the supreme court in such department, or a majority of them, to prosecute all proceedings for the removal or suspension of attorneys and counsellors-at-law or the said justices, or a majority of them may appoint any attorney and counsellor-at-law to conduct a preliminary investigation and to prosecute any disciplinary proceedings and, during or upon the termination of the investigation or proceedings, may fix the compensation to be paid to such attorney and counsellor-at-law for the services rendered which compensation shall be a charge against the county specified in his certificate and shall be paid thereon.

8. Any petitioner or respondent in a disciplinary proceeding against an attorney or counsellor-at-law under this section, including a bar association or any other corporation or association, shall have the right to appeal to the court of appeals from a final order of any appellate division in such proceedings upon questions of law involved therein, subject to the limitations prescribed by article six, section seven, of the constitution of this state.<sup>1</sup>

9. No objection shall be taken to the appointment of any member of the bar to act as referee or judge in a disciplinary proceeding under this section on the ground that he is a member of a bar association or other corporation or association which is the petitioner therein.



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10. Any statute or rule to the contrary notwithstanding, all papers, records and documents upon the application or examination of any person for admission as an attorney and counsellor at law and upon any complaint, inquiry, investigation or proceeding relating to the conduct or discipline of an attorney or attorneys, shall be sealed and be deemed private and confidential. However, upon good cause being shown, the justices of the appellate division having jurisdiction are empowered, in their discretion, by written order, to permit to be divulged all or any part of such papers, records and documents. In the discretion of the presiding or acting presiding justice of said appellate division, such order may be made either without notice to the persons or attorneys to be affected thereby or upon such notice to them as he may direct. In furtherance of the purpose of this subdivision, said justices are also empowered, in their discretion, from time to time to make such rules as they may deem necessary. Without regard to the foregoing, in the event that charges are sustained by the justices of the appellate division having jurisdiction in any complaint, investigation or proceeding relating to the conduct or discipline of any attorney, the records and documents in relation thereto shall be deemed public records. L. 1909, c. 35; formerly § 88, amended L.1912, c. 253; L.1913, c. 720; L.1915, c. 475; L.1918, c. 105, § 2; L.1921, c. 295, § 1; L. 1922, c. 339, § 1; L.1925, c. 236; L.1933, cc. 132, 400; L.1937, c. 311, § 1; L.1937, c. 651; L.1941, c. 290, § 43; L.1943, c. 710, pt. 1, § 1000; L.1945, c. 675; renumbered 90 and amended L.1945, c. 649, § 44; L.1946, c. 241, § 2; L.1949, c. 701, § 1; L.1958, c. 960, § 24; L.1961, c. 733; L.1962, c. 310, §§ 205, 206, eff. Sept. 1, 1963.

<sup>1</sup> Const. Art. 6, § 3.



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Appendix E

Relevant State Statutory  
and Constitutional Provisions

Article 6, Sec. 3a of  
the New York State Constitution

**§ 3. [Jurisdiction of court of appeals]**

a. The jurisdiction of the court of appeals shall be limited to the review of questions of law except where the judgment is of death, or where the appellate division, on reversing or modifying a final or interlocutory judgment in an action or a final or interlocutory order in a special proceeding, finds new facts and a final judgment or a final order pursuant thereto is entered; but the right to appeal shall not depend upon the amount involved.

Section 5501(b) of  
the New York Civil Practice  
Law and Rules

**§5501. Scope of Review.**

(b) Court of appeals. The court of appeals shall review questions of law only, except that it shall also review questions of fact where the appellate division, on reversing or modifying a final or interlocutory judgment, has expressly or impliedly found new facts and a final judgment pursuant thereto is entered. On an appeal pursuant to subdivision (d) of section fifty-six hundred one, or subparagraph (ii) of paragraph one of subdivision (a) of section fifty-six hundred two, or subparagraph (ii) of paragraph two of subdivision (b) of section fifty-six hundred two, only the non-final determination of the appellate division shall be reviewed. 1

THE  
JOURNAL OF  
THE  
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
VOLUME 40  
PART 1  
1910

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Appendix E

Section 5601 of The  
New York Civil Practice Law  
and Rules

**§ 3601. Appeals to the court of appeals as of right.**

(a) Dissent, reversal or modification. An appeal may be taken to the court of appeals as of right in an action originating in the supreme court, a county court, a surrogate's court, the family court, the court of claims or an administrative agency, from an order of the appellate division which finally determines the action, where (i) there is a dissent on a question of law in favor of the party taking such appeal, or (ii) such order directs a reversal of the judgment or order appealed from, or (iii) such order directs a modification thereof in a substantial respect, which is within the power of the court of appeals to review on such appeal, and the party taking the appeal is aggrieved by the modification.

(b) Constitutional grounds. An appeal may be taken to the court of appeals as of right:

1. from an order of the appellate division which finally determines an action where there is directly involved the construction of the constitution of the state or of the United States; and

2. from a judgment of a court of record of original instance which finally determines an action where the only question involved on the appeal is the validity of a statutory provision of the state or of the United States under the constitution of the state or of the United States.

(c) From order granting new trial or hearing, upon stipulation for judgment absolute. An appeal may be taken to the court of appeals as of right in an action originating in the supreme court, a county court, a surrogate's court, the family court, the court of claims or an administrative agency, from an order of the appellate division granting or affirming the granting of a new trial or hearing where the appellant stipulates that, upon affirmance, judgment absolute shall be entered against him.





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(d) Based upon non-final determination of appellate division. An appeal may be taken to the court of appeals as of right from a final judgment entered in a court of original instance or from a final determination of an administrative agency, or from an order of the appellate division which finally determines an appeal from such a judgment or determination, where the appellate division has made an order on a prior appeal in the action which necessarily affects the judgment or determination and which satisfies the requirements or subdivision (a) or of paragraph one of subdivision (b) except that of finality.



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Notice of Appeal

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

HERBERT MILDNER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

74C 1101

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and  
as Presiding Justice, Appellate  
Division of the State of New York,  
Second Judicial Department, et al.,

Defendants.

-----x

NOTICE OF APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT OF  
THE UNITED STATES:

Notice is hereby  
given that HERBERT MILDNER, the plaintiff  
above named, hereby appeals to the  
Supreme Court of the United States from  
the Order dismissing the complaint  
entered in this action on October 9, 1975.



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This appeal is taken  
pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1253.

/s/

HERBERT MILDNER, Pro Se  
75-40 Austin Street  
Forest Hills, New York 11375

TO: LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ, ESQ.  
Attorney General of the State of  
New York  
Attorney for Defendants  
2 World Trade Center  
New York, New York 10046

Filed: November 7, 1975

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This report is made

presented to the U.S. Army

REPORT NUMBER: 1110  
11-11-11  
11-11-11

TO: THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
ATTENTION: CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
FROM: THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
ATTENTION: CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Appendix G

SUMMONS

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

HERBERT MILDNER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as  
Presiding Justice, Appellate Division  
of the Supreme Court of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Department,  
HENRY J. LATHAM, J. IRWIN SHAPIRO,  
ARTHUR D. BRENNAN, FRED J. MUNDER, MARCUS  
G. CHRIST, JAMES D. HOPKINS, A. DAVID  
BENJAMIN, M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO, JOHN P.  
COHALAN, JR., individually and as  
Associate Justices of the Appellate  
Division of the Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Second Judicial De-  
partment, and IRVING N. SELKIN, indiv-  
idually and as Clerk of the Appellate  
Division of the Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Second Judicial De-  
partment,

Defendants.

-----x





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To the above named Defendants:

You are hereby summoned and required to serve upon

LIPPE, RUSKIN & SCHLISSEL, P.C.  
plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is

114 Old Country Road  
Mineola, New York, 11501

an answer to the complaint which is herewith served upon you, within Twenty Days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of day of service. If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

/s/ Lewis Orgel  
Clerk of Court

/s/ Marc Miller  
Deputy Clerk

Date: July 25, 1974



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Appendix H

COMPLAINT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

-----x

HERBERT MILDNER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as  
Presiding Justice, Appellate Division  
of the Supreme Court of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Department,  
HENRY J. LATHAM, J. IRWIN SHAPIRO,  
ARTHUR D. BRENNAN, FRED J. MUNDER, MARCUS  
G. CHRIST, JAMES D. HOPKINS, A. DAVID  
BENJAMIN, M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO, JOHN P.  
COHALAN, JR., individually and as  
Associate Justices of the Appellate  
Division of the Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Second Judicial De-  
partment, and IRVING N. SELKIN, indiv-  
idually and as Clerk of the Appellate  
Division of the Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Second Judicial De-  
partment,

Defendants.

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Plaintiff, by his attorney,  
LIPPE, RUSKIN & SCHLISSEL, P.C., respectfully states:

1. The jurisdiction of this Court is based upon 42 U.S.C. Section 1983 and 28 U.S.C. Sections 1343 and 2201 in that plaintiff is being deprived of his civil rights as secured by the due process and equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and of his right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment as secured by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

2. Plaintiff is an attorney duly licensed to practice law in the State of



New York.

3. Plaintiff resides at 75-40 Austin Street, Forest Hills, New York, and maintains his office for the practice of law at 26 Court Street, Brooklyn, New York. Both of these locations are within the territorial jurisdiction of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, and within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.

4. Upon information and belief, defendant Gulotta is the Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Second Department, which is located in Brooklyn, New York, and he resides within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.



New York.

3. Personal service at 12-40

Austin Street, New York, New York

and maintain his office for the

case of law at 12 Court Street, New York

New York. Both of these locations are

within the territorial jurisdiction of the

the Appellate Division of the State

Court of the State of New York.

Judicial Department, and within the

territorial jurisdiction of the

4. Such information is hereby

determined and is hereby

of the Appellate Division of the State

Court, which is hereby

York, and be served with the

court, Appellate Division of the State

5. Upon information and belief, defendants, Latham, Shapiro, Brennan, Munder, Christ, Hopkins, Benjamin, Martuscello and Cohalan, are Associate Justices of the Appellate Division, Second Department, and they reside within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.

6. Upon information and belief, defendant, Selkin, is the Clerk of the Appellate Division, Second Department, and he resides within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.

7. Pursuant to Section 90 of the Judiciary Law of the State of New York, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in each Department is authorized to censure, suspend from



practice, or remove from office any attorney and counsellor at law admitted to practice who is guilty of professional misconduct, malpractice, fraud, deceit, crime or misdemeanor, or any conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice and that same court is also given authority to revoke an admission of an attorney who has supplied misinformation in connection with his application for admission to the Bar.

8. On or about the 4th day of October, 1972, the Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department (Appellate Division) commenced disciplinary proceedings against plaintiff upon information supplied by Roberta Evans.

practice, or remove from office any attorney

any and counsel as to law admitted as

practice who is guilty of professional

misconduct, dishonesty, fraud, bribery,

crime or misdemeanor, or any conduct which

reflects on the administration of justice

and that such person is also guilty of

any act which is a violation of the

and has engaged in such conduct as

connected with the administration of the

justice to the State.

It is the duty of the court to

protect the public interest in the

administration of justice.

It is the duty of the court to

maintain the integrity of the

justice system.

9. On or about the 3rd day of November, 1972, the Appellate Division appointed the Hon. Albert S. McGrover, a Justice of the Supreme Court, Kings County, to hear and report in connection with the disciplinary matter.

10. The Referee heard testimony of approximately 850 pages and reported to the Appellate Division that none of the charges against plaintiff had been sustained (Exhibit "A").

11. On or about the 6th day of July, 1973, Solomon A. Klein, on behalf of the Judicial Inquiry of the State of New York, moved in the Appellate Division to disaffirm the Referee's Report dismissing the charges against plaintiff; a cross motion to confirm the Referee's



Report was made by plaintiff herein.

12. On or about the 28th day of January, 1974, the Appellate Division, Second Department, granted the motion to disaffirm the report; denied the motion to confirm the report; and suspended plaintiff herein from the practice of law for three years commencing March 1, 1974. (Order, Exhibit "B"; Opinion, Exhibit "C").

13. Having obtained a stay of the order of suspension, plaintiff made an application to the Appellate Division, Second Department, for reargument or for permission to appeal to that Court. That motion was denied on March 7, 1974 (Exhibit "D"). A motion in the Court of Appeals for leave to appeal to that





Court was denied on May 9, 1974 (Exhibit "E").

15. There is presently sub  
judice in the Appellate Division, Second Department, an application to set a new effective date for the order of suspension.

16. Neither the Constitution of the State of New York (Article VI) nor the Civil Practice Law and Rules of the State of New York provides for an appeal as of right to the Court of Appeals of the State of New York the only appellate tribunal to which an appeal may be taken from an order or judgment of the Appellate Division, including disciplinary matters involving attorneys.



17. Upon information and belief, all other litigants and every other person in the State of New York have at least one appeal as of right from the court of original jurisdiction, or from the determination of an administrative body.

18. Upon information and belief, there was no evidence adduced before the Referee which would be competent to sustain the charges against the plaintiff, particularly in a situation in which he was not in an attorney-client relationship with the complaining witness.

19. Upon information and belief, plaintiff has an unblemished record in the practice of law and there have been no complaints filed against him in fifteen



(15) years of practice, except for the instant complaints.

20. Because of the aforesaid, the constitutional rights of the plaintiff have been violated as follows:

(a) He has been deprived of a valuable property right and privilege (i.e., his license to practice law and to earn a living as well as his professional reputation) in violation of the due process and equal protection of the laws provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in that the Constitution and Statutes of the State of New York do not provide for an appeal as of right beyond the court of original



jurisdiction (Appellate Division) in connection with the suspension of an attorney and as a result of such denial he will be suspended from the practice of law in the State of New York for three years.

(b) The plaintiff has been deprived of a valuable property right and privilege (i.e., his license to practice law and to earn a living as well as his professional reputation) in violation of due process guarantee in the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in that he has been suspended from the practice of law in New York State on the basis of a record which lacks





sufficient evidence to support the determination, and he has also been suspended in connection with a matter involving a person with whom he was not in an attorney-client relationship.

(c) The punishment imposed is cruel and unusual punishment under the circumstances as set forth above.

21. Plaintiff has completely exhausted his state remedies, and unless this Court grants the injunctive relief requested, he will be irreparably harmed, financially and in his professional reputation, by being suspended from the practice of law for three (3) years.

22. Plaintiff does not have an adequate remedy at law.

subsequent evidence to support the charges  
against him, and he has since been  
in connection with a number of persons  
a person with whom he was in the  
Attorney-General's office.

(c) The Government Agent

is a man of considerable ability and  
the chief magistrate of the district  
of the district.

estimated to be about 40 years of age  
less than 40 years of age. He is a  
reliable representative of the district  
and is a man of high character.

about 40 years of age. He is a  
reliable representative of the district  
and is a man of high character.

as a person of high character.

WHEREFORE, it is respectfully requested that this Court grant judgment:

(1) declaring that plaintiff's suspension from the practice of law in the State of New York was a result of a procedure which deprived him of rights guaranteed to him by the Fourteenth and Eighth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States; and

(2) permanently enjoining the defendants and those acting on their behalf from suspending plaintiff from the practice of law in the State of New York; and



(3) granting plaintiff such other and further relief as to the Court may seem just and proper under the circumstances.

Dated: Mineola, New York  
July 23, 1974

Yours, etc.,

LIPPE, RUSKIN & SCHLISSEL,  
P.C.

Attorney for Plaintiff

By s/ John M. Armentano  
JOHN M. ARMENTANO  
114 Old Country Road  
Mineola, New York  
(516-248-9500)



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Appendix H  
Exhibit A to Complaint

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
APPELLATE DIVISION:SECOND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

-----X

In the Matter of HERBERT MILDNER,  
an attorney and counselor at law:

SOLOMON A. KLEIN,

Petitioner,

HERBERT MILDNER,

Respondent

-----X

REPORT AND FINDINGS

of

MR. JUSTICE ALBERT S. MCGROVER

Brooklyn, New York  
June 12, 1973



Appendix B  
 Exhibit A to Complaint

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
 APPELLATE DIVISION: SECOND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

In the matter of HERBERT WILLIAMS,  
 an executor and administrator of the

estate of

JOHN WILLIAMS,

Respondent.

Complainant.

AND

IN SENATE

January 1, 1911

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
APPELLATE DIVISION:SECOND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

-----x

In the Matter of HERBERT MILDNER,  
an attorney and counselor at law:

SOLOMON A. KLEIN,

Petitioner,

HERBERT MILDNER,

Respondent.

-----x

TO THE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT,  
APPELLATE DIVISION, SECOND DEPARTMENT:

The undersigned, appointed by order dated November 3, 1972 to hear and report my findings upon the issues raised by the petition and answer of the respondent in the above proceeding concerning the professional conduct of Herbert Mildner, an attorney admitted to practice by the Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department, on June 11, 1959, does hereby



respectfully report as follows:

A total of seven hearings were held before me beginning on December 8, 1972 and ending on April 12, 1973, resulting in a record of more than 850 pages.

The charges against respondent are set forth in paragraph Fifth of the petition. It is there alleged that respondent "has been guilty of illegal, corrupt and unethical practices and of professional misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice in his office as an attorney and counselor at law, in that", he was guilty of various misdeeds specified in subparagraphs A, B and C and the subdivisions thereof, encompassing a total of three charges.

On January 5, 1973 the allegation of



the petition made in subdivision 4 of subparagraph A (Charge One) was amended with the consent of the respondent.

The respondent interposed an answer denying all of the charges.

The charges made against the respondent, my findings, my comments thereon, and my conclusions with respect thereto are as follows:

#### CHARGE ONE

A. Respondent in the period between December 1, 1970 and August 1, 1971 wrongfully converted to his own use the sum of \$17,500. in funds entrusted to him by Roberta Evans, a personal friend, in the manner hereinafter specified.

1. In November and December 1970, respondent deceived Roberta Evans into giving him possession of \$17,430. of her money, upon his false representations that:



(a) he would hold her money for safekeeping in savings bank accounts in his name alone.

(b) the money would be protected from any claim from Mrs. Evans' husband, with whom a divorce action was then pending, and,

(c) the money would be safe as long as Mrs. Evans had possession of the passbooks and no one could "touch it" except her.

2. In November and December 1970 the said \$17,430. fund was deposited by respondent into two savings bank accounts with the Franklin National Bank, one in the branch located at 189 Montague Street, Brooklyn, New York (hereinafter called the "Montague Street Account") and the other in the branch located at Columbus Circle, New York, New York (hereinafter called the "Columbus Circle Account"); both passbooks being entitled "Herbert Mildner special funds for Roberta Evans".

3. On or about December 4, 1970, the same day he opened the Columbus Circle account as





hereinabove alleged, respondent wrongfully converted \$1,500. from that account by cashing against it, a \$1,500. check payable to himself and drawn on a closed account of Herbal Construction Co., Inc., a corporation of which he was an officer. On or about December 11, 1970 Franklin National debited the Columbus Circle account by \$1,500. to cover respondent's bad check.

4. On or about December 21, 1970 respondent withdrew \$2,500 in cash from the Montague Street account which sum, together with an additional \$2,500 in cash given to him by Roberta Evans, was to be deposited into the Columbus Circle account, the latter account bearing a higher interest rate. Respondent failed to deposit the said \$5,000 and wrongfully converted the same to his own use. In place of said cash respondent deposited into the Columbus Circle account a \$5,000 check drawn on his personal account with Marine Midland Bank, which account was overdrawn by a sum in excess of \$150. On or about December 29, 1970 said check was returned for



insufficient funds to Franklin National Bank which debited the Columbus Circle account by \$5,000 to cover the respondent's bad check.

#### THE EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

During the months of November and December, 1970, Roberta Evans, who was a close personal friend of respondent for a number of years, turned over to him the sum of \$17,430. For some time prior thereto Mrs. Evans, the mother of two small children and a teen-aged son, had been experiencing matrimonial difficulty. She was separated from her husband and a divorce action between the two was then pending. The money given to respondent by Mrs. Evans represented the bulk of an inheritance received by her from the estate of her deceased mother.



Mrs. Evans informed respondent of her fear that her husband would decrease her alimony if he found out about the inheritance. In order to insulate this money from her husband she turned it over to respondent for safekeeping.

On November 25, 1970 Mrs. Evans withdrew \$8,480 from her savings account and accompanied by respondent went to the Montague Street branch of the Franklin National Bank in Brooklyn, where respondent opened a savings account entitled "Herbert Mildner Special Funds for Roberta Evans" bearing account #3-2384 (PX1; 1-5-73 15, 16). Roberta Evans turned the \$8,480 over to respondent who deposited that sum in this newly opened account (1-5-73 16, 17).



On December 4, 1970 Mrs. Evans delivered to respondent an additional \$4,000 in cash which she had withdrawn from her East River Savings Bank account and with this money respondent opened a second account with the Franklin National Bank, in the Columbus Circle branch in Manhattan bearing account #31-19615 (PX 3; 3-23-73 434) and deposited the \$4,000 into this new account. This account was opened by respondent entitled "Herbert Mildner - special funds for Roberta Evans"; the words "funds for Roberta Evans" being in respondent's own handwriting.

Respondent's was the sole authorized signature on both the accounts (PX 2, 4). Mrs. Evans explained that the reason why



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the accounts were entitled "Herbert Mildner special funds for Roberta Evans" was because she didn't want her husband knowing about this money (1-5-53 17).

The second account was opened at the Columbus Circle branch since it paid a higher interest rate and respondent maintained his personal checking account there and did business with that branch (PX 25-18).

On December 4, 1970, the same day that respondent opened the Columbus Circle account, he cashed a \$1,500 check payable to himself against the Columbus Circle account containing Mrs. Evans' money (PX 7; 12-8-72 41-43, 72-75). The check, which was drawn by respondent on an account maintained with the Ellenville



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National Bank, in Woodbridge, New York, by Herbal Construction Co., a firm in which respondent and his brother, Alvin Mildner, were co-partners, bore the endorsement "Herbert Mildner spec." in respondent's handwriting (3-9-73 319-323), although the account number "31-19615" endorsed on the check was that of a bank employee (12-8-72 74). On December 11, 1970 respondent's check was returned to Franklin National since the Herbal Construction Co. account was closed at the time the check was presented for payment at the Empire National Bank (PX 7). On that date Franklin National debited the Columbus Circle account containing Mrs. Evans' money by \$1,500 to cover respondent's bad check. The Herbal Construction



Co. account was closed on November 27, 1970. However, respondent was not notified that the account was closed (3-9-73 297-298) (Resp. Ex. G).

On December 21, 1970 respondent withdrew \$2,500 from the Montague Street account with Mrs. Evans' knowledge and she gave him an additional \$2,500 in cash, both amounts to be deposited in the Columbus Circle branch account (1-5-73 19-21, 60). In place thereof respondent deposited a \$5,000 check drawn on his personal account with the Poughkeepsie branch of the Marine Midland Bank. On December 29, 1970 the check which respondent made payable to "Herbert Mildner Special" and endorsed "for dep. 31-19615", was returned for insufficient funds and on that

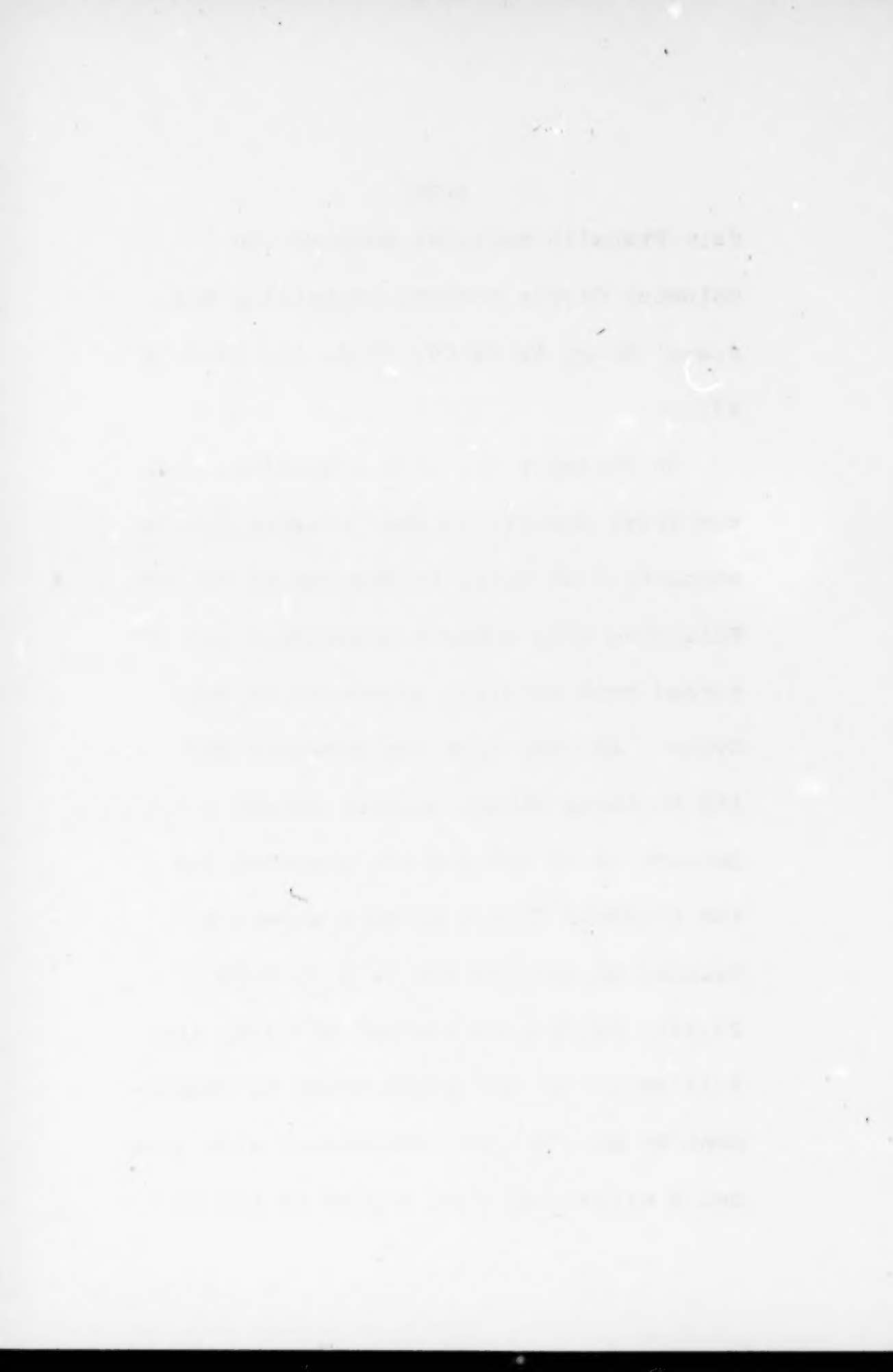


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date Franklin National debited the Columbus Circle account containing Mrs. Evans' money by \$5,000 (PX8, 13; 12-8-72 43).

On December 31, 1970 respondent made the final deposit to the Columbus Circle account, that being in the sum of \$2,450. Following that deposit respondent returned both original passbooks to Mrs. Evans. At that time the passbook for the Montague Street account showed a balance of \$5,980 and the passbook for the Columbus Circle account showed a balance of \$11,450 (PX 1, 3; 1-5-73 23,24), which sums totaled \$17,430, the full amount of the money given to respondent by Mrs. Evans. Respondent also gave her a withdrawal slip signed by him in





blank at the same time that he returned the original passbooks for the last time (1-5-73 27-28). He told her, however, to hold on to the passbooks and she put them away (1-5-73 25).

Roberta Evans had no knowledge that respondent received \$1,500 on December 4, 1970 by cashing his bad check against the Columbus Circle account, nor did she know that the account was debited by that amount on December 11, 1970 (1-5-73 55-57). Likewise, she had no knowledge that on December 21, 1970 respondent deposited a worthless check of \$5,000 in the Columbus Circle account and kept her cash of \$5,000 (1-5-73 58-60).

On December 31, 1970 respondent returned the passbooks to Mrs. Evans. How-



ever, the true balance in the Columbox Circle account was actually \$6,500 less than the amount shown on the passbook (3-23-73 471).

On April 21, 1971 Franklin National issued substitute passbook #3-2483 to respondent to replace the Montague Street account #3-2384, on the basis of his "affidavit of lost passbook" which he signed before an officer of the bank on March 19, 1971 (PX 9; 12-8-72 29). On April 22, 1971 the Columbus Circle branch issued a substitute passbook to respondent for the second account (#31-19615) following submission by him of a similar "affidavit of lost passbook" which was signed by him on April 13, 1971 (PX 10).

Roberta Evans did not learn until



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December 1971 that respondent had submitted the affidavits of lost passbook and that substitute passbooks had been issued to him (12-8-72 33, 34, 103; 1-5-73 69-72).

On April 21, 1971, using the substitute passbook, respondent withdrew \$5,000 from the Montague Street account (PX 12, 29; 498) and deposited that sum to his personal checking account maintained at Franklin National's Columbus Circle branch (PX 14, 15; 502). On April 22, 1971 respondent withdrew \$5,000 from the Columbus Circle account using the substitute passbook for that account (PX 12, 30; 498-9) and on April 26, 1971 respondent withdrew an additional \$1,000 from the Montague Street account (PX 29).



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Both these sums were credited directly to respondent's Franklin National checking account (PX 14, 15; 12-8-72 47, 508-11).

At the time these withdrawals totaling \$11,000 were made by respondent in April, 1971 it was without knowledge on the part of Roberta Evans (1-5-73 73, 77).

In December, 1971 Mrs. Evans told respondent that she wanted the interest from her money to buy some furniture (1-5-73 33). Respondent gave her his personal check for \$650 on Friday, December 3, 1971. She called the Montague Street branch of Franklin National on Monday, December 6, 1971, to confirm the interest and arrange to have it entered in her passbooks (1-5-73 36, 37).





Joseph A. Guarino, Chief Clerk of the Montague Street branch, received Mrs. Evans' call that morning. She explained to him that she had two accounts listed in the name of Herbert Mildner; that the money in the accounts belonged to her and that she had the passbooks and wanted to confirm the balances or the interests for the accounts (12-8-72 24-28). She gave him the numbers of the accounts from her passbooks, namely: 3-2384 for the Montague Street branch and 31-19615 for the Columbus Circle branch (1-5-73 38), and she told him that the balances for the two accounts totaled approximately \$17,000 (12-8-72 23-4, 26). Mr. Guarino found that an affidavit of lost passbooks had been filed and new account numbers issued. He checked

Chapter 4. General. (See also p. 115)

The following is a list of the names of the persons who

have been mentioned in the preceding chapters.

For the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the

preceding chapters, see the list of names on p. 115.

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the balance in the Montague Street branch account and found the balance to be \$2.91 (PX 19; 12-8-72 28-30). He then called the Columbus Circle branch and learned that that account was closed.

When Mr. Guarino returned to the telephone and told Mrs. Evans that the balances were rather nominal, she began crying. She said that this was her money and somebody had taken it (12-8-72 32-3).

On December 9, 1971 Roberta Evans testified under oath at the Judicial Inquiry. She testified that she never authorized respondent to withdraw any of the money out of either of the accounts; that the money was hers exclusively; that the first time she learned that any of the money was taken out of the ac-



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counts was December 6, 1971, the same day she called the bank (1-5-73 42-6).

ROBERTA EVANS' RECANTATIONS

Roberta Evans testified before this court that when she gave respondent her money she knew that he was going to use it; that he was going to invest it for her and that he would put the money back plus whatever profit he made, but when she called the bank and learned that there was nothing in there she became hysterical (1-5-73 40). She said that she lied before the Judicial Inquiry because she wanted to get back her money (1-5-73 43).

Roberta Evans received her money back from respondent plus interest by April of 1972 (1-25-73 168).



CONCLUSION

I find that this allegation has not been sustained insofar as it is claimed respondent in the period between December 1, 1970 and August 1, 1971 wrongfully converted to his own use the sum of \$17,500 in funds entrusted to him by Roberta Evans. It appears that at no time was there a relationship of attorney and client between the respondent and Roberta Evans. They were intimate friends for many years. Roberta Evans acted voluntarily in withdrawing her inheritance money and transferring the funds to the respondent in order to insulate this money from her husband while a divorce action was then pending. I find that the transfer of the funds by Roberta Evans was intended





for safekeeping in December, 1970; that respondent's banking practices were "loose, slipshod and lax" and that he issued checks which were returned "insufficient funds" and charged against the account which he opened with the funds of Roberta Evans; that respondent's manipulation of the funds and his failure to keep Roberta Evans properly informed of each withdrawal transaction and the manner of his disposition of her funds deserves criticism. Nevertheless, it does appear from the evidence that Mrs. Evans lied before the Judicial Inquiry according to her own admissions in order to influence the institution of this proceeding and secure the return of her funds.

I find that petitioner has not sus-



tained the burden of proof by a fair preponderance of the evidence that respondent converted to his own use the sum of \$17,500 in funds entrusted to him by Roberta Evans without her knowledge and consent.

CHARGE TWO

B. Respondent attempted to impede and obstruct the Judicial Inquiry in its investigation into his conduct, as follows:

1. On or about December 8, 1971 respondent attempted to persuade the complainant, Roberta Evans, to cancel her appointment to testify before the Judicial Inquiry concerning the facts of her complaint against him and respondent further attempted to persuade Roberta Evans not to communicate or cooperate further with the said Judicial Inquiry.

2. On or about December 8, 1971 respondent delivered to



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Roberta Evans two promissory notes of \$8,000. each, back dated to November 30, 1970 and December 1, 1970, respectively, said promissory notes having in fact been prepared and signed by respondent on or about December 8, 1971, together with respondent's personal affidavit, wherein the funds delivered to him by Roberta Evans were falsely characterized as a loan and the foregoing promissory notes were given as evidence thereof. Respondent knew, or should have known, that the foregoing false physical evidence, to wit: the two promissory notes and his affidavit, would come to the attention of the said Judicial Inquiry.

3. On or about February 23, 1972 respondent induced Roberta Evans to give a false statement of facts to Henry Drescher, Esq. an attorney who respondent sought to represent him in the matter under investigation by the Judicial Inquiry; respondent told Roberta Evans that if she did not give said statement falsely saying that:

(a) the money had been a loan,



- (b) respondent asked her and she consented to each withdrawal, and
- (c) in her opinion, respondent had done nothing dishonest,

then said attorney would not agree to represent him and she, Roberta Evans, would not get her money back. Respondent intended and in fact did submit said false statement to the Judicial Inquiry on March 24, 1972.

4. On or about April 7, 1972 certain cancelled checks drawn on respondent's personal account, having been previously delivered by him to the Judicial Inquiry pursuant to a subpoena duces tecum, were given to respondent upon his representation that said checks would be returned to the Judicial Inquiry as soon as respondent had completed preparation of his 1971 income tax returns. Despite repeated requests respondent refused to return said checks.

#### THE EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

The evidence tends to indicate that





respondent did not tell Mrs. Evans "not to communicate or cooperate further with the Judicial Inquiry" (1-25-73 179).

The undersigned concluded from Mrs. Evans' testimony that respondent told Mrs. Evans on December 8, 1971 to calm down and relax before she went down to testify before the Judicial Inquiry and that she should try to postpone her appointment with Mr. Cooper for the following week (1-25-73 180-181, 219-222).

On December 8, 1971 respondent gave to Roberta Evans an affidavit bearing his signature and two promissory notes in the amount of \$8,000 each, together with a check in the sum of \$1,430 (PX 20, 21, 22, 23; 1-5-73 50, 605-6, 609). The promissory notes signed by



respondent were back-dated to November 30, 1970 and December 1, 1970.

Roberta Evans did in fact testify at the Judicial Inquiry on December 9, 1971, after receiving a subpoena.

On February 18, 1972 respondent was personally served with a subpoena requiring his attendance at the Judicial Inquiry and to produce his check-stub book and all checks drawn on his Franklin National account, returnable on February 23, 1972.

On February 23, 1972 Roberta Evans gave a statement to respondent's attorney, Henry Drescher, stating that respondent told her in February, 1971 that "he needed money to pay on account of a mortgage on an upstate bungalow colony" and



in April, 1971 "he withdrew various sums with her full knowledge and consent from replacement passbooks --", (PX 24).

The statement was not signed by Mrs. Evans because she did not as yet receive the balance of her money from respondent (1 - 25 - 73 110).

Respondent appeared and testified at the Judicial Inquiry on March 24, 1972. He did not produce his checkbook as requested in the subpoena. He did produce his checks some time after the date requested in the subpoena. Mr. Cooper returned the checks to respondent on April 6, 1972 for use by respondent in the preparation of his income tax returns. The hearing before the Judicial Inquiry was adjourned to April 12, 1972 at which time



respondent failed to appear because he was hospitalized. The matter was adjourned ultimately without date due to respondent's illness.

### CONCLUSION

I find that this allegation has not been sustained insofar as it is claimed that respondent attempted to impede and obstruct the Judicial Inquiry in its investigation into his conduct.

### CHARGE THREE

C. On March 24, 1972 respondent appeared as a witness before the Judicial Inquiry pursuant to subpoena and having taken an oath that he would testify truly and with knowledge of the nature of the matter under investigation, respondent, contrary to such oath, testified falsely to relevant and material facts and with knowledge that such testimony was false and untrue. Respondent testified falsely in words and substance that:





1. In December 1970 or January 1971 he asked Roberta Evans if he could use her money for his own purposes and she said that he could.

2. In April 1971, he made the first withdrawal from either of the two accounts for his own purposes; that said withdrawal was in the sum of \$10,000. and was made without a passbook by direct transfer into his checking account.

3. In January of February 1971, he made the first withdrawal for his own purposes; that said withdrawal was in the sum of \$5,000. and was made by means of a duplicate passbook, because Roberta Evans had lost both original passbooks.

4. In January or February, 1971, he made the first withdrawal; that said withdrawal in the sum of \$5,000. was made without passbooks.

5. In April, 1971, he told Roberta Evans that he needed money to pay off a mortgage held by the Empire National Bank on his bungalow colony called the Lakewood Bungalow Colony and she said he could use the money so long as he



put it back by December, 1971.

5. In April 1971, he withdrew \$10,000. from the savings accounts containing Mrs. Evans' money; that after depositing it into his checking account, he wrote two checks totalling \$10,000. payable to Empire National Bank; that after delivering the checks to the bank, said checks were presented and paid.



THE EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

Respondent testified at the hearing before the Judicial Inquiry that in December, 1970 or January, 1971 he asked Roberta Evans if he could use her money for his own purposes and she said that he could (PX 25, 26-27). This was not controverted by the evidence. On the contrary, Roberta Evans testified that she permitted respondent to use the money when she gave it to him but he was supposed to put it back (1-5-73 42). She further testified that she lied when she testified before the Judicial Inquiry to the effect that she did not authorize respondent to withdraw any money out of her



account (1-5-73 43,44). She further testified that the reason she lied at the Judicial Inquiry was because she wanted to get her money back (1-5-73 54,55).

On March 24, 1972 respondent's testimony concerning the first occasion that he withdrew any money from the two accounts for his own purposes was somewhat contradictory. He had first testified that he thought he made the first such withdrawal in April, 1971 in multiples of five or \$4,000 and he thought it was by direct transfer without a passbook (PX 25-29). He then changed his testimony, stating that he made the first withdrawal for





his own purposes in January or February, 1971, in the sum of \$5,000 by means of a duplicate passbook (PX 25-44,45, 47-48). Respondent then changed that answer, testifying that the first withdrawal in January or February of 1971 in the sum of \$5,000 was made without a passbook (PX 25-50). Respondent, in fact, made no withdrawals in January or February, 1971 (556). He was referring to the \$5,000 taken by him on December 21, 1970 - he testified that he "considered" that to be a withdrawal (558) - that was a debit resulting from respondent's deposit of a worthless check (PX 8 & 27; 557,561). Respondent admitted that his answers to these questions were "partially incorrect" (562).



CONCLUSION

I find that this allegation has not been sustained insofar as it is claimed that respondent testified falsely at the Judicial Inquiry to relevant and material facts and with knowledge that such testimony was false and untrue.

I may add that the attorney for respondent, Henry A. Drescher, in his memorandum, unjustly and unfairly criticized the attorney for petitioner, Nicholas C. Cooper, as "scraping the bottom of the barrel" in addition to other improper references. There does appear numerous



questionable acts justifying a conclusion that in many instances the respondent was negligent and careless in the handling of his bank accounts; in neglecting to keep Roberta Evans informed of his handling of her funds and in failing to return the funds to Mrs. Evans before the institution of the disciplinary proceedings.

Submitted herewith are the following:

1. Petitioner's petition and respondent's answer.
2. Minutes of hearings held before me.
3. Exhibits.



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4. Petitioner's briefs.
5. Respondent's memorandum.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York  
June 12, 1973

s/ Albert S. McGrover  
ALBERT S. MCGROVER  
Justice of the  
Supreme Court





188a  
Appendix H  
Exhibit B to Complaint

At a Trial of the  
Appellate Division of  
the Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Se-  
cond Department, held in  
Kings County on Janu-  
ary 28, 1974.

HON. FRANK A. GULOTTA, Presiding Justice  
HON. HENRY J. LATHAM )  
HON. J. IRWIN SHAPIRO ) Associate  
HON. ARTHUR D. BRENNAN ) Justices  
HON. FRED J. MUNDER )

-----x  
:  
In the Matter of :  
:  
Herbert Mildner, an : Order of Sus-  
attorney. : pension  
:  
Solomon A. Klein, :  
:  
Petitioner, :  
:  
Herbert Mildner, :  
:  
Respondent. :  
:  
-----x

A disciplinary proceeding having  
been instituted in this court upon the  
petition of Solomon A. Klein in respect



to Herbert Mildner, an attorney and counselor at law, who was admitted to practice on June 11, 1959, by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Third Judicial Department; the petition praying that the respondent Herbert Mildner be disciplined for professional misconduct upon the charges therein set forth; the respondent having filed an answer to the petition; this court by order dated November 3, 1972, having referred the issues raised by the pleadings to the Hon. Albert S. McGrover, a Justice of the Supreme Court, to hear and to report with his findings upon each of the issues; and the said Justice having held hearings and having filed his report dated June 12, 1973 with this court on June 22, 1973, together with the stenographic minutes of the hearings and exhibits; and the petitioner having moved by notice of motion, dated July 6, 1973, to disaffirm the report; and the respondent having cross-moved to affirm the report;

NOW, upon the petition sworn to October 11, 1972, as amended by stipulation dated December 29, 1972, the answer verified October 20, 1972; the said report, the transcript, the exhibits; the said notice of motion and affidavit of Nicholas C. Cooper in support thereof; the said cross-motion and memorandum in support thereof; and upon all the papers filed herein; and



Nicholas C. Cooper, Esq., having appeared of counsel for the petitioner, and Henry A. Drescher, Esq., having appeared of counsel for the respondent; due deliberation having been had thereon; and upon the per curiam opinion of the court dated January 28, 1974, it is unanimously

ORDERED, that the petitioner's motion to disaffirm the report is hereby granted and respondent's cross-motion to confirm the report is hereby denied, and it is further

ORDERED, that the report and the findings therein are hereby disaffirmed and the charges set forth in the petition, as amended, are hereby found to have been sustained by the proof, and it is further

ORDERED, that the respondent HERBERT MILDNER is hereby suspended from the practice of the law for a period of three years commencing March 1, 1974 and continuing until the further order of this court, with leave to respondent to apply for reinstatement after the expiration of said period of three years, upon furnishing satisfactory proof:

(a) that during said period he has actually refrained from practicing law or attempting to practice as an attorney and counselor at law; (b) that he has fully complied with this order and with the terms and provisions of the written



rules governing the conduct of dis-  
barred, suspended and resigned attor-  
neys, a copy of such rules being an-  
nexed hereto and made a part hereof; and  
(c) that he has otherwise properly con-  
ducted himself; and it is further

ORDERED, pursuant to statute  
(Judiciary Law, §90), that during the  
period of suspension and until the  
further order of this court, the re-  
spondent HERBERT MILDNER be and he here-  
by is commanded to desist and refrain:  
(1) from practicing law in any form,  
either as principal or agent, clerk, or  
employee of another; (2) from appearing  
as an attorney or counselor at law before  
any court, judge, justice, board, commis-  
sion or other public authority; (3) from  
giving to another an opinion as to the  
law or its application, or any advice in  
relation thereto; and (4) from holding  
himself out in any way as an attorney or  
counselor at law.

Enter:

IRVING N. SELKIN

Clerk of the  
Appellate Division

APPELLATE DIVISION-SUPREME COURT  
SECOND DEPARTMENT  
STATE OF NEW YORK

I, IRVING N. SELKIN, Clerk





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of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Second Judicial Department, do hereby certify that I have compared this copy with the original filed in my office on January 28, 1974, and that this copy is a correct transcription of said original.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of this Court on January 31, 1974.

IRVING N. SELKIN



193a  
Appendix H  
Exhibit C to Complaint

January 28, 1974

SUPREME COURT, APPELLATE DIVISION  
SECOND JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

-----

GULOTTA, P.J., LATHAM, SHAPIRO, BRENNAN  
and MUNDER, JJ.

-----

IN THE MATTER OF  
HERBERT MILDNER, an attorney.

SOLOMON A. KLEIN,

Petitioner,

HERBERT MILDNER,

Respondent.

-----

No. 3904/1973

Disciplinary proceeding instituted by Solomon A. Klein, Chief Counsel to the Judicial Inquiry on Professional Conduct. By order of this court dated



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November 3, 1972 the issues were referred to Honorable ALBERT S. McGROVER, a Justice of the Supreme Court, to hear and report.

Solomon A. Klein  
(Nicholas C. Cooper  
of Counsel),  
petitioner in person.

Henry A. Drescher  
for respondent.

Per Curiam.

The respondent was admitted to the Bar on June 11, 1959, at a term of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in the Third Judicial Department. The petition sets forth three charges of professional misconduct against the respondent. The Justice of the Supreme Court to whom the issues were referred has submitted his report to this court in which he concludes that none of



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the charges have been sustained. The petitioner now moves to disaffirm the report and, implicitly, for a finding that all three charges have been sustained. The respondent has submitted a brief, in which he states he cross-moves to confirm the report.

Charge One alleges, in essence, that the respondent induced a personal friend to entrust him with \$17,430 on the pretext that that money would thereby be protected from any claims by her husband in a pending divorce action and that, through various means, the respondent wrongfully converted the money to his own use.

Charge Two alleges that the respondent attempted to impede and obstruct the Judicial Inquiry in its investigation





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into his conduct, by attempting to persuade the above-mentioned friend not to cooperate with the Judicial Inquiry, by inducing her to give a false statement of facts bearing upon the investigation, by executing certain backdated promissory notes and a false affidavit in an effort to deceive the Judicial Inquiry and by refusing to turn over certain physical evidence requested by the Judicial Inquiry.

Charge Three is that the respondent knowingly gave false testimony to the Judicial Inquiry.

In our opinion, contrary to the report, all three charges are fully sustained by the proof. Accordingly, the petitioner's motion to disaffirm the report is granted and the respondent's



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cross-motion to confirm the report is denied.

In view of all the circumstances indicated by the record and considering the respondent's evident lack of candor and contrition, it is our opinion that suspension from the practice of law for a period of three years would be a suitable and appropriate discipline to be imposed upon the respondent. Accordingly, the respondent is suspended from the practice of law for a period of three years, commencing March 1, 1974.

GULOTTA, P.J., LATHAM, SHAPIRO, BRENNAN and MUNDER, JJ., concur.



198a  
Appendix H  
Exhibit D to Complaint

At a Term of the  
Appellate Division of the  
Supreme Court of the  
State of New York, Second  
Judicial Department, held  
in Kings County on  
March 7, 1974.

HON. FRANK A. GULOTTA, Presiding Justice  
HON. JAMES D. HOPKINS )  
HON. M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO ) Associate  
HON. HENRY J. LATHAM ) Justices  
HON. J. IRWIN SHAPRIO )

-----x  
:  
In the Matter of :  
:  
Herbert Mildner, : Order on  
an attorney. : Motion  
:  
Solomon A. Klein, :  
:  
Petitioner, :  
:  
Herbert Mildner, :  
:  
Respondent. :  
:  
-----x

In the above entitled discipli-  
nary proceeding, this court by its opin-  
ion, decision and order dated January 28,  
1974, having granted petitioner's motion  
to disaffirm the Justice's report and



denied respondent's cross-motion to confirm said report and having directed that the respondent Herbert Mildner be suspended from the practice of the law for a period of three years commencing March 1, 1974 and continuing until the further order of this court; and the respondent having moved (1) for reargument of his cross-motion to reconsider the quantum of punishment imposed upon said respondent (2) or, in the alternative, for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeals from the order of this court, dated January 28, 1974, which suspended him from the practice of law for a period of three years; and (3) to stay the effective date of the suspension pending determination of this application;

Now, on reading and filing the order to show cause, dated February 21, 1974; the affidavits of Herbert Mildner and Richard E. Leavitt in support of said motion; the affidavit of Nicholas C. Cooper in opposition thereto; and the motion having been submitted by Richard E. Leavitt, Esq., of counsel for the respondent and by Nicholas C. Cooper, Esq., of counsel for the petitioner; upon all the papers filed and upon all the proceedings heretofore had herein; and due deliberation having been had thereon; and upon the decision slip of the court herein, heretofore filed and made a part hereof; it is





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ORDERED, that the said motion  
is hereby denied.

Enter:

IRVING N. SELKIN

Clerk of the  
Appellate Division



201a  
Appendix H  
Exhibit E to Complaint

STATE OF NEW YORK,

IN COURT OF APPEALS

AT A COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE STATE  
OF NEW YORK, HELD AT COURT OF AP-  
PEALS HALL IN THE CITY OF ALBANY  
ON THE NINTH DAY OF MAY, A.D. 1974.

PRESENT, HON. CHARLES D. BREITEL,  
Chief Judge, presiding.

-----

2            Mo. No. 285(B)

In the Matter of

Herbert Mildner,  
an attorney.

-----

Solomon A. Klein,

Respondent,

Herbert Mildner,

Appellant.

-----

A motion for leave to appeal to  
the Court of Appeals in the above cause



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having been heretofore made upon the  
part of the appellant herein and papers  
having been duly submitted thereon and due  
deliberation thereupon had:

ORDERED, that the said motion be  
and the same hereby is denied.

/s/ James M. Flavin  
Clerk

IN THE  
**Supreme Court of the United States**

OCTOBER TERM, 1975

No. 75-972

HERBERT MILDNER,

*against*

*Appellant,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, HENRY J. LATHAM, J. IRWIN SHAPIRO, ARTHUR D. BRENNAN, FRED J. MUNDER, MARCUS G. CHRIST, JAMES D. HOPKINS, A. DAVID BENJAMIN, M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO, JOHN P. COHALAN, JR., individually and as Associates Justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, and IRVING N. SELKIN, individually and as Clerk of the Court of the State of New York, Second Department,

*Appellees.*

No. 75-856

MILTON LEVIN,

*against*

*Appellant,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,

*Appellees.*

No. 75-1111

JULIUS GERZOF,

*against*

*Appellant,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,

*Appellees.*

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

---

---

**MOTION TO DISMISS OR AFFIRM**

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---

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SAMUEL A. HIRSHOWITZ  
First Assistant Attorney General

DANIEL M. COHEN  
A. SETH GREENWALD  
Assistant Attorneys General  
*of Counsel*





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IN THE  
**Supreme Court of the United States**

OCTOBER TERM, 1975

---

No. 75-972

HERBERT MILDNER,

*against*

*Appellant,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, HENRY J. LATHAM, J. IRWIN SHAPIRO, ARTHUR D. BRENNAN, FRED J. MUNDER, MARCUS G. CHRIST, JAMES D. HOPKINS, A. DAVID BENJAMIN, M. HENRY MARTUSCELLO, JOHN P. COHALAN, JR., individually and as Associates Justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, and IRVING N. SELKIN, individually and as Clerk of the Court of the State of New York, Second Department,

*Appellees.*

---

No. 75-856

MILTON LEVIN,

*against*

*Appellee,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,

*Appellees.*

---

No. 75-1111

JULIUS GERZOF,

*against*

*Appellant,*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, et al.,

*Appellees.*

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

---

**MOTION TO DISMISS OR AFFIRM**

The defendants-appellees move to dismiss the appeal from the order of a three-judge Court directing the entry of judgment dismissing the complaints in these actions upon the ground that the order directing judgment was entered upon an *abstention* basis, *not on the merits*.

The *order* of the statutory court and the prevailing opinion, written by District Judge Neaher (although it discussed the merits and reached a conclusion thereon adverse to the plaintiff-appellant) were firmly placed upon the ground that the federal court should *abstain* from passing upon the merits (3a-33a).<sup>\*</sup> Circuit Judge Moore indicated that, in the interest of "conservation of judicial effort", he would have disposed of the case on the merits and would have sustained, as constitutional, the New York statutes challenged (Judiciary Law, § 90; New York Constitution, Art. 6, § 3a; and CPLR, § 5501b and 5601) in order to avoid this Court's "admonitions" in *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 420 U.S. 799, 95 S. Ct. 1278 (1975), against the non-appealability of three-judge District Court orders not "resting on a resolution of the constitutional merits of a complaint" (34a, 35a, 37a). Only District Judge Weinstein reached the conclusion that New York's provisions for lawyer-disciplinary proceedings were unconstitutional (38a-121a).

### **The Opinions Below**

References in the plaintiffs' briefs to the District Court opinions are correct. The opinions have not yet been reported.

### **Jurisdiction**

Each of the plaintiffs invoke this Court's jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1253. But each goes to great length

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<sup>\*</sup> Unless otherwise stated, references are to the appendix in the *Mildner* case (75-972).

to skirt this Court's ruling in *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 420 U.S. 799 (1975), that it will not entertain an appeal from a three-judge court order which is *not* predicated upon a disposition of "the merits of the constitutional claim presented below" (420 U.S., at p. 804).

### **Statutes Involved**

References in the plaintiffs' briefs to the statutes involved are correct.

### **Question Presented**

The sole question presented upon this motion to dismiss or affirm is whether this Court has jurisdiction to entertain this appeal since the order below was not predicated upon the merits of the constitutional claim presented by the plaintiffs.

### **Statement of the Case**

For the purposes of the disposition of this motion, we shall not encumber these papers with any detailed analysis of the different factual situations presented by the three jurisdictional statements here involved, but shall reserve such separate analysis for our brief in the event, which we deem unlikely, that this Court determines to note jurisdiction. We call the Court's attention solely to the fact that in the *Gerzof* case, the Appellate Division confirmed its referee's report, whereas in the other cases, it did not do so (*Gerzof Jur. Statement*, p. 6).

## ARGUMENT

Since the statutory court did not predicate its order upon a disposition of the merits of the plaintiffs' constitutional claims, this Court should dismiss this appeal or affirm the order appealed from, pursuant to its decision in *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 420 U.S. 799, 804 (1975). Moreover, no substantial federal question has been presented.

### (1)

It clearly appears from each of the jurisdictional statements that the majority opinion of the three-judge court was predicated upon the principle of abstention and avoidance of a final disposition of the merits of the plaintiffs' constitutional claims. No matter how anxious Circuit Judge Moore appears to have been to reject the plaintiffs' constitutional claims, he signed the order and joined in the majority opinion enunciated by Judge Neaher which was based upon an avoidance of the merits.

We urge, therefore, that this appeal be rejected in accordance with this Court's decision in *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 420 U.S. 799 (1975). See also *Mendez v. Heller*, 420 U.S. 916 (Feb. 18, 1975), where this Court remanded an appeal to the District Court which had made a clear disposition on constitutional merits, but had determined that no case or controversy had been presented. No such remand is necessary here to enable the parties to appeal to the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, for they have all already taken such appeals. Indeed, in the *Levin* case, the Attorney General has already been served with an order of the Second Circuit, dated and filed January 30, 1976, directing the filing of Levin's record on or before March 15, 1976; his brief and joint appendix on or before April 26, 1976; and the appellees' brief on or before May 26, 1976. The Second Circuit order has required the appellant, Levin, to notify it of this Court's action with respect to the appeal

he filed in this Court; has ordered that argument of the appeal be ready to be heard during the week of June 7, 1976; and also subjects the *appellees* "to such sanctions as the court may deem appropriate" if we fail to file a brief within the time directed by the Second Circuit's order.

We should assume that the terms of the Second Circuit's order were predicated upon an assumption that this Court would not note jurisdiction; and a further awareness that the stays granted by the District Court to each of these appellants have served effectively to delay the implementation of the state court orders suspending each of these appellants from continuing to practice law. We note, too, that *each* of these appellants has filed a protective appeal to the Second Circuit. We can not conclude this section of our motion without calling to this Court's attention the criticism being leveled at the legal profession for the *delays* which already exist in processing of disciplinary proceedings affecting New York lawyers. See the report of the *ad hoc* Committee on Grievance Procedures of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. 175 New York Law Journal, No. 24, February 4, 1976, pp. 1, 5; and see the New York Times discussion of the report. Vol. CXXV, No. 43110, February 4, 1976, pp. 1, 25.

## (2)

The appellants have failed to give appropriate emphasis to the fact, undisputed, that the New York statutory procedures which they attack *permit the New York Court of Appeals*, even under all the circumstances appellants have stated, *to grant leave to appeal* to any attorney who has been subjected to disciplinary action by the Appellate Division. Although the New York Court of Appeals must exercise this power with a discretion appropriate for the State's highest court, it must be noted that the New York Constitution, Article 6, § 3 circumscribes the jurisdiction of the state Court of Appeals in



*all* cases, not only in lawyer disciplinary cases. The New York Court of Appeals power to grant leave is equivalent to that given this Court to deny an application for certiorari and to reject an appeal, such as this, for failing to present a *substantial* federal question. The appellants seek to enlarge the "mandatory docket" of the New York Court of Appeals, in a fashion which this Court did not deem suitable to its own "mandatory docket" in *Gonzalez v. Automatic Employees Credit Union*, 419 U.S. 90 (1974).

Nor have the appellants given any weight to the fact that, in each of their cases, if they had appropriate grounds for doing so, they might have sought direct review by this Court of the action of the New York Court of Appeals in denying any application they had made for leave to appeal (3a, 4a).

Little consideration, too, has been given by the appellants to the fact that only the licenses of lawyers to practice their profession are entrusted to the New York Appellate Divisions. All other professions, for valid reasons, are licensed by the State Department of Education (104a). For appropriate reasons, therefore, based upon the distinctions between the professions, review of professional disciplinary action has been subjected to a different method of review. *Semler v. Oregon State Board of Dental Examiners*, 294 U.S. 608, 610 (1935).



## CONCLUSION

The appeal should be dismissed in accordance with this Court's decision in *MTM, Inc. v. Baxley*, 420 U.S. 799; or the order appealed from should be affirmed.

Dated: New York, New York, February 11, 1976.

Respectfully submitted,

LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ  
Attorney General of the  
State of New York  
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and *Pro Se*, pursuant to  
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*Of Counsel*

IN THE  
**Supreme Court of the United States**

October Term, 1975

No. 75-972

Herbert Mildner, *Appellant,*  
*vs.*

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice,  
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of  
New York, Second Judicial Department, *et al.,*  
*Appellees.*

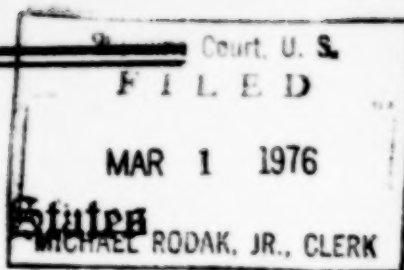
On Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Eastern District of New York

BRIEF OF APPELLANT MILDNER IN OPPOSITION  
TO MOTION TO DISMISS OR AFFIRM

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Of Counsel:

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(516) 248-9500



IN THE  
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1975

No. 75-972

Herbert Mildner,

Appellant,

vs.

FRANK A. GULOTTA, individually and as Presiding Justice, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Second Judicial Department, et al.,

Appellees.

\_\_\_\_\_  
On Appeal from the United  
States District Court for  
the Eastern District of  
New York

\_\_\_\_\_  
BRIEF OF APPELLANT MILDNER IN OPPOSITION  
TO MOTION TO DISMISS OR AFFIRM

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STATEMENT

This brief is submitted on behalf of Appellant Herbert Mildner in opposition to the motion of the Appellees, dated February 11, 1976, which seeks to dismiss the appeal from the order of the three-judge court, or in the alternative, to affirm the order of that Court.

THE MOTION TO DISMISS OR AFFIRM SHOULD BE DENIED AND THIS COURT SHOULD NOTE JURISDICTION.

One wonders about the reluctance of the Appellees to permit prompt consideration of this matter by this Court, especially in light of their own reference to alleged criticism being "leveled at the legal profession for" delays in processing disciplinary proceedings affecting New York lawyers (Appellees' Motion to Dismiss or Affirm, p.5).

In light of this concern, it would seem that Appellees would wish to have this issue resolved by our highest court as promptly as possible.

Appellees also choose to ignore the very significant differences between this case and those relied upon by them, MTM, Inc. v. Baxley, 420 U.S. 799 (1975) and Mendez v. Heller, 420 U.S. 916 (1975). Neither of those cases involved the questionable constitutionality of procedures affecting the very ability of a duly licensed professional to continue to practice his profession. Judge Neaher found this question "not without some force" and of a "serious procedural and substantive" nature; Judge Moore found it of "sufficient importance to be resolved by our highest court"; and Judge Weinstein

found the procedure to be constitutionally infirm. This alone is a sufficient basis for distinguishing those cases.

There are several additional compelling reasons why the motion to dismiss or affirm should be denied and why this Court should note jurisdiction:

1. Two of the three judges below (Judges Moore and Weinstein) unquestionably passed on the constitutional issues presented. Surely, no argument could be made concerning appealability if Judges Moore and Neaher had simply found the procedures constitutional and had never mentioned abstention; in fact, a direct appeal has been expressly held to be permitted in such a situation. Anderson v. Martin, 372 U.S. 904 (1963). Thus, the mere fact of a split in the three-judge court is

irrelevant.

2. MTM itself holds that a direct appeal to the Supreme Court will lie under §1253 "where such order rests upon resolution of the merits of the constitutional claim presented below" (MTM at p.804). From this starting point we ask simply: Did not two of the three judges below (Weinstein and Moore) rest their determination on the merits of the constitutional claim presented? Of course they did; Judge Weinstein found the constitutional claim to be valid and Judge Moore found it to be without validity. Thus, the case is clearly one where two of the three members of the Court below rested their determination, albeit differently, on the merits of the constitutional claim presented.

3. Further, the order below does



not rest upon the absention doctrine. Try as Appellees might, they cannot overcome the fact that only one Judge, Judge Neaher, even remotely based his ruling on the abstention doctrine. Judge Moore specifically disassociated himself from the abstention doctrine.\* How then can it be claimed that the ruling below was based on absention? Appellant fails to understand any rational basis for such a contention.

To say the least, it is questionable whether Judge Neaher rested his determination on the abstention doctrine. Not only is most of his opinion directed to the merits

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\* Mr. Justice Douglas expressed his doubts about the ability of a single judge to dismiss based on the abstention doctrine. See dissenting opinion in MTM.

of the constitutional claims, his actions in staying the state disciplinary proceedings pending appeal is inherently inconsistent with any abstention.

Moreover, not only did Judge Neaher discuss the constitutional claims, he specifically resolved them, albeit adversely to Appellant. Thus, at the conclusion of his analysis of Appellant's due process claims, Judge Neaher stated that:

"We [presumably he and Judge Moore] agree...that there is no violation of equal protection in the procedure adopted by New York for the review of disciplinary proceedings." Mildner Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement, p.24a.

Further, at the portion of his decision and order entitled "The Due Process Claim", Judge Neaher wrote:

"The critical question is whether it can truly be said that any of those procedural features operate to deny accused attorneys a fundamentally fair hearing of the charges against them, thereby resulting in an unconstitutional application of the states. We [presumably he and Judge Moore] think not." Mildner Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement, p.24a.

With regard to certain additional claims set out by the Appellants, Judge Neaher wrote:

"We [presumably he and Judge Moore] would therefore reject those claims raised in the Mildner and Gerzof complaints which suggest that the lack of evidentiary basis for the decisions was itself a denial of due process or equal protection, or constituted, when the resultant discipline was decreed, cruel and unusual punishment." Mildner Appendix to Jurisdictional Statement, p.27a.

Thus, we have Judge Neaher [and

Judge Moore] "agreeing" that there is no violation of equal protection; "thinking" there is not an unconstitutional application of the statutory procedure; and "rejecting" the claims of denial of due process and equal protection and of cruel and unusual punishment being imposed. Is anything else necessary to constitute a "resolution of the merits of the constitutional claim[s]" presented, within the meaning of MTM? Judge Neaher could have done nothing more on the merits; he "resolved" those issues against Appellants. And his order staying the state procedures pending appeal is a further indication of his "resolution" of the merits.

4. Why force Appellant to go to the Court of Appeals? Three judges have already passed on the merits, one of them

a Court of Appeals Judge. Will it be of any aid to the Court or the Federal judicial system to have three more Court of Appeals' Judges pass on the issues? As Mr. Justice White so aptly stated in MTM, to force Appellant to go to the Court of Appeals would be an "exorbitant expenditure of judicial manpower, and without reason..." MTM, p.806.

5. Why should this Court not hear the case now? Appellees have set forth no compelling reasons why this Court should now refuse jurisdiction. Their argument concerning the Second Circuit Court of Appeals' assumption that this Court would not note jurisdiction (Motion to Dismiss or Affirm, p.5) is both speculative and specious. If there were a real desire to fully, finally,

and promptly determine the constitutionality of the process for disciplining attorneys in New York State, Appellees would be urging, rather than objecting to, this Court's noting jurisdiction.

Appellees forget, continually, that the very livelihoods of at least three professionals are at issue here. Why must this matter, acknowledged by all to be of great significance to the entire Bar of the State of New York (and perhaps the Nation) become bogged down in a procedural morass of questionable technicalities. While Appellant does have the benefit of a stay of his suspension, the stigma of that suspension cannot be removed. Every effort should be made to fully and finally determine this matter on the merits as quickly as possible.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein and in Appellant's Jurisdictional Statement, as well as in the Jurisdictional Statements of Appellants Gerzof and Levin, this Court should accept jurisdiction of this appeal and reverse the decision below. In the event that this Court determines that the requisite jurisdiction is not present, it is respectfully requested that it remand the case to the Court below with instructions to enter a fresh order and judgment so that a timely appeal may be prosecuted to the Court of Appeals.

Respectfully submitted,

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